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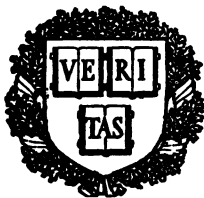
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IVO AND VERENA.

LONDON :
PRINTED BY LEVEY, ROBSON, AND FRANKLYN,
Great New Street, Fetter Lane.

IVO AND VERENA,

OR THE

Snowdrop.



LONDON:

JAMES BURNS, 17 PORTMAN STREET.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE ideas in this little Tale were chiefly collected from books; but from books which are out of the reach of children generally, and especially of that class of children for whom the Tale was written.



IVO AND VERENA;

OR,

The Snowdrop.

THE countries of the North are much colder than ours: the sun does not come in sight all through the winter months; the snow covers the ground, and does not melt; the lakes and rivers are frozen; every thing looks dead and dreary.

In one of these countries there lived once a youth whose name was Ivo. He was a heathen, for he had never been taught the Gospel: he had never been baptised, so that he was not a member of Christ, nor a child of God, nor an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven. Yet, though he had been born in sin, a child of wrath, and had never been born again of water and of the Spirit, yet he did

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not love sin,—he wished to be good. He did not know the creed, nor the commandments, nor the Lord's prayer; he knew nothing of our Saviour having come down from heaven to redeem men; and he did not know all the things that he ought to do, nor how to pray for help that he might do them.

His father and his brothers were great warriors, and Ivo went to battle with them; he was brave, and feared no dangers; he could climb like a young goat upon the steep rocks; he could fight valiantly, and bear cold, and hunger, and fatigue. The people of that country believed that if they were brave, and killed many enemies, and died in battle, they should go after their death to a happy land, where they should drink strong liquors, and feast, and enjoy themselves. But these tales did not satisfy young Ivo: he wanted something better,—he thought his soul must have been given him for something more than that.

I will tell you how it happened that Ivo could not feel satisfied; that he wanted to know more, and to do more; that he could not think it enough to hunt, and drink, and feast, as his brothers did. But to do that, I must go back to his childhood.

Ivo had a twin-sister; they were the youngest of their family, and their mother

died soon after they were born. They were fair, and full of life and gentleness; and they played before their father as the kids play together, and he watched their mirth, and loved them dearly. They loved each other too, for they had slept in the same cradle when they were infants, and they had taken the first steps together when they began to walk. They grew up together, like two buds on one stem.

One day they went out to wander among the mountains, as they were used to do; for Ivo took care of his sister as tenderly as if he had been her nurse, and he now felt brave enough and strong enough to take care of her, though he was yet but a boy.

They had wandered about for several hours, gathering flowers as they went; and when evening came on, they were far away from their home. The sun was getting low, and Ivo began to think about finding their way back: but whilst he thought of this, he saw something which drew off his attention. He saw an old man, who looked like a traveller, with a long white beard, and a great cloak wrapped round him, sitting on a green bank under some trees. Ivo and his sister Verena went near to the old man; and Ivo said to her, that if he was tired, they would ask him to come home with them to their father's house, to rest himself. When they

came close to him, they found that he was reading in a book ; and they were curious to see what it was, for they had never seen a book before : the people of their country carved figures and letters on stones, but they did not know how to make books ; and the letters in the old man's book were unlike any that Ivo and Verena had ever seen. When they asked the old man some questions about his book, he told them that in it were written the prayers which he said to God ; and when Ivo asked him what God he prayed to, the stranger answered that it was to the Great God, who made heaven and earth. Ivo's countrymen prayed to gods of their own devising, to dead men who had been great warriors among them ; and though they said some things about the great God who was over all, yet they did not think much of Him, nor seek to know Him. The old man now spoke earnestly to Ivo about the Almighty God, and Ivo listened with all his might, and asked questions of him, and begged him to go home with them. Whilst Ivo was begging him to do this, they heard suddenly a great noise of shouting, and there came in sight a troop of men, with spears and stones in their hands, who rushed upon the old man. When he saw them coming, he seemed to know that their rage was aimed against him ; but he did not try to get away, for they were too near upon

him; neither did he seem overcome with fear; but he knelt down peacefully on the grass, and clasped his hands, as if he was praying. When Ivo saw these people pointing their spears, and raising their stones to throw against the old man, he put himself before him, to try to protect him; and one of the spears struck Ivo on his forehead, so that he fell back senseless. When he came to himself, he was lying on the ground, and old Rolf, one of his father's servants, was hanging over him, and washing the blood from his forehead. He started up quickly, and looked about him; but no one was in sight; and he cried out "Where is Verena?" But when Rolf gave him no answer, and he strained his eyes in vain and could not see her, he grew faint again, and sank into Rolf's arms. Rolf carried him home; but Verena came home no more—she was not seen after that time when the wild, fierce people rushed upon the old stranger. That stranger was a Christian priest, who had come to convert the heathen; for there were Christians living near to where Ivo's nation lived; and the bishop who governed that part of the Christian Church had sent out a missionary to preach the Gospel among them; but they did not like his teaching, and in their anger they tried to kill him; and after he had once escaped from their hands, they followed him

to the place where Ivo and Verena found him resting, and they killed him there. Just afterwards, a party of Christians came to the same spot, who, having heard something of the missionary's danger, were seeking for him, to save him from his enemies. They came too late, for the wild people had just killed him. These heathens ran away when they saw the Christians coming on horseback, with their armour on ; and the Christians took up the body of the priest who had been slain, and carried it away to bury it. They did not take Ivo away, though they wondered to see him lying there by the old man's side, and, as they thought, dead ; they left him to be buried by his own people. But as they went away, they found Verena wandering alone and crying ; and out of pity they took her with them. So when old Rolf came to the spot some time after, he only found Ivo lying on the ground bleeding. Rolf then carried him home to his father's house, and Verena was carried away by the Christians.

Since that time, Ivo had felt two wishes always uppermost—one was, to know more of the God who made heaven and earth ; the other was, to find Verena again. For some time after he met the Christian priest, he talked often to his father and brothers about the wonderful things which he had heard from him ; but they did not pay any atten-

tion to these things. They were satisfied with the gods to which they paid worship, and did not care to know more about the One Great God. So, by degrees, Ivo left off talking to them about it, and shut up his thoughts in his own heart. As to Verena, he did not keep back from his father and brothers how much he longed to find her again. They had grieved for her, and tried to find her, but in vain; and Ivo continually asked leave of his father to go and seek for her: his father always answered, that he was too young.

It was a clear cold night in the winter; Ivo rode along a narrow valley between high rocky mountains; his horse's feet sounded evenly on the hard frozen snow, and there was no other sound. The stars shone bright in the sky above him; and Ivo looked up, and thought of Him, who, as he had been told, had put them there. He wanted the help of that unknown God.

He was coming back from a feast that had been given by one of his father's friends, at which the young men of the country had striven together, according to their custom, and had tried which was the bravest, and strongest, and most skilful in the use of the spear and the bow. Ivo had gained the prize

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from all his companions of the same age with himself; and when his father saw that, and heard his praises from the lookers-on, he granted him the favour so often asked, and told him that he might go forth in search of Verena. So Ivo rode home, thinking of the request which had been at last granted him, and eager to set out, but thinking also how much he should like to pray to that great God who *could* help him, and to feel sure of His assistance. He did not know how to pray to the God who lives on high, so far above men's thoughts, as well as beyond their sight. He thought of the old man's book of prayers, and wished that he knew them: he felt afraid lest God should not care for him, or should be displeased with him; he could not tell how to draw near to God. The world that God had made seemed so large, and he seemed so small. He looked up to the bright stars, and then down to the cold white earth, and he felt desolate and lost. He wished that a messenger from heaven could be sent to teach him.

He rode all night, and in the morning the sun rose brightly; for the northern winter was coming to an end, and the sun was no longer hidden all day as well as all night, though the snow was not yet melted. The rocky mountains rose high above Ivo, and their sides were covered with dark firs; he

passed by a lake which was frozen over, and not far from the shore he saw an island in the lake, on which grew a cluster of snowdrops; they shewed their green leaves above the snow, and their flowers hung drooping among the leaves; the light of the rising sun glistened on these flowers, and Ivo stopped his horse that he might look at them. He thought they looked cheerful amidst the cold and desolate country, and they told that spring was coming. "Surely," said he in his heart, "the God who makes the snowdrops grow will not forget me; perhaps He may send some messenger of good news to me, as He sends the snowdrops to promise us spring." He turned his horse's head, and rode across the ice to the island; when he had reached it, he sprung off his horse and stooped to gather a snowdrop; then he knelt down on the ground to pray, for he longed to ask for help, and he resolved to speak to the unknown God in the best words that he could think of, hoping that he might be heard. He knew that the old man whom he had met with did not pray to any image, and he remembered how that old man knelt down, when his enemies came against him, and clasped his hands, as if praying to some One who was in heaven. Ivo had always remembered that, and had treasured up the words which the Christian spoke; and as he kept

them in a heart which he tried, as well as he knew how, to purify from sin, they were kept safe, and never departed from his memory. He prayed now till the sun shining bright upon his eyes made him look up; he saw before him a stone cross; its edges sparkled, as the sun shone upon the snow that covered it. He got up, without much thinking what he did, and went close to the cross; and on the stone which it stood upon he saw some words written. The words were these: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life:" they were cut in the stone, after the manner of Ivo's nation, so that he was able to read them; and when he had read them, they seemed to him to be engraven in his heart. He had often read inscriptions that were made upon the tombs of great warriors, to tell of their valiant deeds whilst they lived; but he had never read such a promise as this, and he thought it must come from the unknown God. He got upon his horse and rode home, thinking how he could be faithful unto death.

Do you wonder how that cross and that writing came there? I will tell you. When the Christians took away the body of the old man who had preached the Gospel to the heathen, they passed by this lake; and as they passed, it came into their minds to bury

him in that green island, and to place a stone cross over his grave, and to write something upon the stone, after the manner of the heathen ; for they thought it would be a way to preserve the memory of one who had suffered as a martyr, and that if ever the heathen should be turned to the true faith, they would honour his grave ; so they buried him in the island, where the cross was not so likely to be broken as it might have been any where on the land ; and they read the burial-service over his grave, and then departed.

This missionary had suffered death without converting one heathen to the true faith ; so that his blood seemed to have been shed in vain—but it was not so.

Fancy to yourself a little stream, springing out of the side of a rock, and forcing its way among stones and rough ground, then running over bare heath, and leaving, as it passes, a bright green track, just where the edges of the earth on each side are freshened by its water.

Such as that little stream was the prayer of Ivo, rising from a sad and lonely heart, but refreshing its sadness as it flowed on.

You have heard a prayer likened to a little stream, and you have been told that other prayers may join it. You shall hear of a

prayer that joined Ivo's prayer, and I will tell you what it was like. It was like a stream running evenly through a smooth meadow, where the grass grew plentifully and was kept always green by its passage,—a stream flowing summer and winter without pause, never rushing like a torrent, never drying up.

You will ask me whose prayer this was; and I will tell you. And if you think it pleasant to be like the meadow, which was always kept green and fresh by the stream running through it, I will tell you that *you* too may be like that green fresh meadow; for the prayer which was like the stream was one offered up by a young Christian maiden.

You remember how Verena, Ivo's sister, was carried away by the Christians, who found her wandering alone and crying: she was taken by them to their own country, and there she was brought up by a Christian lady.

She was washed in the holy waters of baptism, and taught to devote herself to the service of the blessed Trinity, in Whose Name she was baptised. With the dew of baptismal grace, she grew up like a flower that is watered abundantly, and screened from the sun. She was mild, and pure, and holy, as a Christian maiden ought to be. Her mo-

desty and lowliness and her gentle smiles were pleasant to see, as the snowdrops early in spring.

On that night when Ivo was looking up at the stars, and longing to know more of their Maker, and to obtain His favour, Verena too was looking at the stars, and adoring Him who made them. She beheld the heavens, the work of His hands,—the stars which He ordained, and appointed to each its course through the sky; and she wished to fulfil *her* appointed duty on earth, as regularly as the stars fulfil theirs. She lay down in peace and took her rest, for she knew that God was watching over her; and she rose again with the light of the new day, that she might praise Him, and lift up her heart to Him, early in the morning. She saw the sun rise, as Ivo saw it; but to her it was more than the light of an earthly day, for it was the first day of the week, the day of the Lord; and as Verena watched the sun rising in glory, she thought of the first day of creation, when God said, “Let there be light, and there was light:” and she thought of that more glorious day, when the Sun of Righteousness rose from the night of death, to give light and immortality to those whom He had redeemed. She rose to her devotions with a glad and willing heart, and her prayers were calm, and steady, and earnest,

such as day by day, week by week, on work-days and on holy days, she offered up in their appointed course.

You know that God listens to all prayers that are uttered from an earnest heart ; He would listen graciously to the prayers of a Christian maiden, who had learnt to call Him Father ; and he would also listen to the prayers of a heathen, who longed to know Him in order to serve Him.

Ivo's prayer and Verena's rose each like a stream apart, but they joined to ascend to God ; and she never forgot to pray for the father and brothers whom she had left, and most especially for her brother Ivo.

Verena served the Christian lady who had brought her up, and lived with her in a large castle. One day she was sitting at work with the maidens who were her companions, when one of them ran into the room, crying out that she had seen from the window some prisoners who were brought into the castle, and that one of them was so like Verena, she had started at the sight. Verena went to the window to look, just as the prisoners were passing under the gateway below ; she turned pale when she saw them, for she knew her brother Ivo ; he was grown into a man since she saw him, but she could not mistake his

features ; she asked earnestly for leave to go and see him, and it was granted her.

When she entered the room in which Ivo was confined, he knew her face, yet saw her as if in a dream,—grown up from his childish playfellow to a tall maiden : he came near to her, and longed to throw his arms round her neck ; but his eye was caught by a cross which she wore on her bosom, and he remembered the cross upon the island, where he had read the words, “ Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” He drew back ; for though he had thought at first that his lost sister was coming to him, yet when he saw the cross, and remembered how he had pondered over the words carved at the foot of a cross, he dared not call her his sister, for it seemed to him rather as if she were a messenger from heaven, sent to teach him.

Verena saw that her brother drew back when he had fixed his eyes on the cross, and she thought he was displeased to see her wear the token of the Christian faith : she was afraid he would not embrace her, when he knew that she was indeed a Christian, and she raised her hand to press it on the cross, as if she could thus clasp it close, and at the same time hide it from Ivo ; and whilst she raised her hand, she reached forward her head towards her brother : but she drew back

her hand before she had pressed it upon the cross, for she remembered that she must not, even for a moment, be ashamed or afraid to confess herself a Christian ; so she stood still and looked wistfully at Ivo. "Are you indeed my sister Verena?" he asked ; and she answered that she was, and held out her arms to him. He came to her and kissed her ; and Verena hid her face on his neck, and wept. When she could speak, she asked, "How are our father and our brothers?" and she raised her head, and looked in Ivo's face again, as if she could not look enough. But though he, too, wished to look in her face, and to ask her about all that had passed since they had been parted, yet his eyes dropped again upon her cross, and it was on his lips to ask her what she wore. She saw that he was looking at it, and she said, "I wear this cross in token that I am a Christian." He trembled when he heard that, for he hoped that she would be able to tell him things which he craved to know ; and yet he feared to speak, or to ask any thing. "Verena," he said at last, "I have seen a cross once before, and at the foot of it these words were written : 'Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' Can you tell me the meaning of those words?" Her eyes shone bright, when he spoke those holy words and asked their meaning, for she knew them well,

and the fear passed away from her mind that Ivo would be angry with her for being a Christian. When that cloud was gone, and she looked at him full of joyful hope, she seemed to her brother like a living snowdrop, promising him more than the snowdrops in the island could promise. She told him that the words which he had seen were written in a holy book, and that from that book we might learn the way to gain eternal life.

“What do you mean by eternal life?” he asked her; “you do not mean what we have heard of at home, hunting, and fighting, and feasting for ever?”

“O no, Ivo—not that,” Verena answered.

“Do you remember,” asked Ivo again—and he spoke timidly, and with much reverence—“do you remember what we heard when we were children from that old man whom we found reading, the same day when you were lost? Oh, Verena, how I have longed to find you again! Tell me, do you remember what he said to us about the Great God who made all things?”

“All that, and much more than that, I have been taught; for that old man was a Christian.”

“Verena, but may I learn what you have learnt?”

And when she answered that surely he

might, he threw his arms round her neck again, and burst into tears.

Verena did not trust Ivo to her own teaching, when she found how much he wished to learn the truths of the Christian faith. There was a clergyman (or priest, as those clergymen who had received priest's orders were then more commonly called) living in the castle, to perform the services of worship, and to take charge of the Christian people who lived there. Verena begged him to instruct her brother, and he readily undertook it. The lord of the castle had made Ivo prisoner in war ; but when he knew that it was likely he might become a convert, as Verena had already, he looked upon him with much interest and kindness, and did all he could to forward his conversion. Ivo had therefore all the leisure and all the help that he could wish for ; and he had the sight of his long-lost sister to cheer him whilst he was learning the truth. He saw her every day ; and when she left him alone with the clergyman who taught him, she would pray that he might profit by what he learnt.

They were now at the beginning of Lent, and it was her earnest desire that by Easter-eve he might be thought fit to receive bap-

tism. Every morning and every evening, when she went into the chapel to attend the service, she longed for the time when Ivo might join in it too. As yet he was a learner of the truth (or, as it was then called, a catechumen), and he could not take part in Christian prayers and services till he was baptised. But as he made progress, and shewed a humble, earnest mind, he was allowed to come into the ante-chapel, or entrance to the chapel; and there he listened to the sound of voices, praying and chanting the psalms, and to the reading of the lessons from Scripture; and whilst he listened thus, apart from the Christian minister and congregation, he prayed fervently for the pardon of his past sins, in that Name which he had just learnt to mention; he prayed no longer in doubt, but in humble trust of being heard. He prayed fervently, and he listened attentively, and drank in the teaching of that holy book which promised "a crown of life" to those who would obey its precepts. He did "mark, learn, and inwardly digest it," and he found the food which he wanted. He had hungered and thirsted "after righteousness," and he obtained the promised blessing of being "filled." All through the holy week before Easter, he listened to the sacred services, which kept the Christians longer than

usual in their chapel, and he learnt the sad yet blessed history of that holy week.

Verena hoped more and more that Ivo would be admitted to receive baptism on Easter-eve ; and on Good Friday she joined more heartily than ever in praying that all heathens might be brought home to the fold of peace and safety ; *more* heartily than ever before she took part in that prayer, though since she had first heard it, she had always joined in it from her heart, entreating the good Shepherd, who had fetched her home whilst she was a lamb not knowing its fold, to fetch home all those whom she had left behind.

Late on the evening of Good Friday, the clergyman came into the room where Verena was sitting with her mistress, and filled her with joy by telling her that he had just promised Ivo to baptise him the next day. She hardly knew how to thank her kind pastor enough for giving her this good news ; he was pleased to see her joy, and to share it, and told her how humble, and earnest, and attentive Ivo had been as a learner ; and that he must hope that the blessing which is promised “to the pure in heart” was in store for his young convert. “With joy,” he said, “shall I bathe your brother in the purifying fountain, and clothe him in the white gar-

ment of salvation ; this, by God's blessing, shall be done to-morrow, and your brother shall die to sin, and rise again to a new life of righteousness."

When Ivo, the next morning, was admitted within the chapel, he felt a trembling joy : he had looked forward for so many days to the time when he might be allowed to enter ; and, as he had an humble opinion of himself, he had doubted whether he should be thought fit to receive baptism on the eve of the great Festival. And now that the time was really come, and that the door was open to him, he rejoiced with trembling ; he felt fear and great joy, as the women did on the morning of the Resurrection, when they heard that their Lord was risen. Since Ivo had begun to learn the Christian faith, every thing had seemed to him full of fear and great joy. He knew that God's Presence was every where, wherever he turned ; that God saw him continually, and would judge his actions and his thoughts. But in the consecrated Place which he was now entering, he knew that God was more especially present ; and he was entering that solemn place for the purpose of receiving God's Presence still nearer to him, even *within* him, by the Holy Ghost given in baptism, so as to be himself made a temple of God. Such thoughts filled him with fear and great joy. He trembled

at the Presence of a God too pure to behold iniquity ; but he rejoiced in the love of God, who had given His Son to die for men, and who, with His Son, would also freely give them all things.

The font stood near the door of the chapel, and there Ivo took his place, and the god-fathers and godmother who had been appointed him stood by him ; they were not to answer for him, since he was of age to answer for himself, but they were to be witnesses of his vow.

He renounced the devil and all his works, and so went on repeating the appointed words, and professed his belief in all the articles of the creed, which he had learnt by heart. He was then baptised in the name of the Holy Trinity, and was signed with the sign of the cross, in token that hereafter he should not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, but should manfully fight under His banner, and be His faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end.

The congregation joined in prayer for him ; and at the end of the service, Ivo, with all present, knelt down, and for the first time he joined in repeating the Lord's prayer, as being now an adopted child of God's family.

Ivo was not yet to be admitted to partake in the other holy Sacrament, because he must first be confirmed by the Bishop.

After the service was ended, his fellow-Christians welcomed him as a brother; and the lord of the castle told him that he should not be shut up or watched as a prisoner, but might henceforth go in and out amongst them, as one in whom they had full confidence. Just before sunset, Ivo and Verena went out together into a wood which was near the castle. Every thing was changed since Ivo first came there as a prisoner; the snow had melted, the streams flowed freely, the ice was all gone, the grass was growing, and the branches of the trees were no longer bare, but covered with fresh leaves. All this seemed like a sudden change to Ivo. He had not been out of the castle since he first entered it; and he, who from his childhood had lived like a free wild bird among the mountains, had remained contented in this captivity, without pining after the fresh air, because his whole heart, and mind, and soul, and strength were bent upon learning the Christian faith. Now he felt again the pleasant breath of spring, and never had it felt before so pleasant. The clear light blue sky, the fresh green leaves, the gay songs of the birds, all seemed to him like something new; and he felt in himself a greater change than he saw in any thing around him,—a change which made every thing around him look beautiful. He looked at all things as being the work of

that God who was now become *his* God, and more than his God—his Father. Verena was by his side, and he felt as happy as he could be. But he was reminded of a still greater happiness; for he heard the bell sounding for evening prayers, and he knew that the God who made all things was calling him, a newly adopted child, to the place of His peculiar Presence, and would suffer him there to join in worship with others of God's adopted children, and to ask those things which he needed, in fitting language, with the certainty of being heard. Therefore the bells calling him to God's own House sounded even pleasanter than the notes of the birds.

The chapel had just been adorned by the lady of the castle and her maidens with fresh green boughs and spring flowers, and it was brightly lighted up; for now the Easter festival was close at hand. Psalms of thanksgiving were chanted, and the triumphant Easter anthem, "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast," &c., was repeated.

Ivo listened with awful joy—he could almost have fancied himself already in heaven; and when he lay down to sleep at night, after saying the Lord's prayer, he felt in his inmost heart that verse of the 91st Psalm, which says, "Whoso dwelleth under the

defence of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

Ivo felt then as happy as he could feel in this world; but such happiness could not be meant to last. It might indeed be granted him to continue a Christian, and therefore to continue in the possession of those blessings which made him so happy; but the faith of God's children is to be tried as gold in the fire, and His jewels are polished and brightened by the troubles of this life, before they are laid up in His treasury. Ivo knew that this was what he ought to expect; he had bound himself to be the soldier and servant of a suffering Lord, and he only desired from his inmost heart, that as, by God's mercy, he had been born again, so he might be enabled to overcome the world. He most earnestly desired to keep that white garment clean which had been given him at his baptism. In those countries where Ivo lived, there is a creature called an ermine, which is hunted for the sake of its white fur, and they say that it will suffer itself to be taken by the hunters, rather than soil its whiteness;—with such a feeling did Ivo prize his baptismal purity. You may guess what was the first thought likely to interrupt Ivo's happiness among his

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Christian friends, and to make him wish to leave them,—he thought of his father and brothers. He could not rest in quietness till he had tried to make them sharers in his new blessings ; and though he knew the risk he ran of making them angry by his attempt, he resolved to try. Verena was willing to return with him ; and they were not refused permission by the lord of the castle.

Before they set off, he made several presents to Ivo ; he gave him seeds to sow, and caused him to learn the way of sowing them, that he might teach his countrymen, who knew nothing of tilling the ground, but lived by hunting and fishing. He also gave him, for his own use, a suit of armour ; for in those troubled times it was the custom to wear armour ; and the shield which this Christian lord gave to Ivo had a cross marked upon it.

After all, it was a sad time when the parting drew near,—when Verena was to leave her kind mistress, and the friends among whom she had lived so long, and the chapel where she had been baptised, and had joined so often in the sacred services. She went there for the last time on the morning of her departure ; and when the litany was read, and she heard the prayer for those who travel by land or by water, and that other prayer for

all who are in danger, necessity, or tribulation, she felt the comfort of having a share in those prayers.

The service ended, Verena said her last farewells, and Ivo lifted her upon the horse which the lord of the castle had given him.

Ivo and Verena rode all day ; and at first they said little to each other, for their hearts were too full to speak much ; but as they drew near to their home, Verena began to exclaim that she remembered the mountains where she played with Ivo when they were children ; and Ivo told her the names that they were called by, and reminded her of things that had happened in their childhood. It was evening when they came to the foot of the mountain on which their father's castle stood ; and Verena remembered the great spreading lime-tree that stood at the bottom of the steep path leading up to the castle. In those days, all people who could fight in their own defence, and who had authority over others, built castles to live in—strong places, such as they could defend against an enemy. Harold's castle stood high up on the side of a mountain. When Ivo and Verena reached it, they were welcomed by old Rolf with all his heart ; and he brought them into the great room or hall, where Harold was alone. It was getting

dark, but light enough remained to shew him the face of his lost son Ivo, and of his longer-lost daughter Verena. He was rejoiced to see Ivo returned ; but when he saw Verena, his joy and surprise overcame him, so that he hardly knew how to speak. He was at all times a man of few words, and he said very little now ; but taking his daughter in his arms, he asked her where she had been, and how she had come back to him. Before she had time to answer these questions, her brothers came in from hunting ; and they too welcomed her with surprise and joy, for they had never expected to see her again, and they were pleased to see her grown up to a tall fair maiden.

They welcomed Ivo too ; but it was not long before they began talking of the share that he was to have of their father's property. That very morning they had been asking their father to tell them how he would divide it among them after his death ; they were jealous of Ivo, because they thought he was their father's favourite ; and it would not have been wonderful if it had been so, for he was the most dutiful of old Harold's sons. But besides being jealous of Ivo, they had been quarrelling among themselves about it, and they now began again to talk in an angry tone. Ivo had always been generous, and ready to give away what he had ; but now

that he was a Christian, he thought he could not give up too much; he thought of the blessings promised to the poor in spirit, to the meek, and the peacemakers. He told his brothers that he did not wish to claim any share of what their father might leave to them. They wondered when they heard that; for though Ivo was willing to give generously, they did not think he would have liked to yield up his claims so quietly. His father asked him what inheritance would remain for him, if he yielded all his share. Ivo coloured, and said softly, that he had the hope of another inheritance. His father thought that he hoped to conquer some new country, for he knew Ivo's courage. His brothers asked him eagerly where his inheritance was, and how he would make sure of it. Verena trembled when she heard all this, for she dreaded the moment when Ivo should make known that he was a Christian; and yet she thought that if his new religion made him so ready to give way, his brothers could not think ill of it. She stood close to his side, but she did not speak. Ivo blushed still more, when he was asked where his inheritance was, and how he would make sure of it; he said that he had been adopted by another Father,—that he had become one among another people, and had the promise of another country. “But will you leave

us, my son ?” old Harold asked. “ Oh no,” Ivo replied ; “ I wish to love you and serve you better than I have ever yet done, my father. As for those favours which have been bestowed upon me, I am not worthy to receive them—yet they are mine.” His brothers wondered again when he said that ; for though he had never been given to boasting, yet they thought he would believe, as they did, that a brave warrior was worthy to receive any thing that his sword could gain : they listened attentively, and began to envy Ivo for his new possessions. “ *My Father,*” he then said firmly, “ is the God of the Christians ; I am one of the Christian people, and my inheritance is the heaven promised to Christians.” When he had said that, he stood still, and looked round upon his father and brothers—not ashamed to confess his faith, but ashamed and afraid lest he should not be worthy to take such words into his mouth. Verena added, before any one else broke the silence ; “ And I too am a Christian.” Harold could not speak at first for surprise ; and he could not help keeping his eyes fixed upon his youngest son. Ivo’s countenance had ever been bright and sweet, such as men love to look upon ; but it had never seemed so bright as now, when it was lighted up with Christian hope,—nor so sweet as now, when it was softened by Christian cha-

rity. Harold could not help thinking that his youngest son looked like a being of some higher sort than all the others, who had been struggling and contending for worldly gain. Ivo's brothers, too, looked at him with perplexity, for they had never before seen how a Christian can be mild and humble, and at the same time steadfast and fearless. But before long they burst forth with anger. Haco, who was the eldest and the fiercest, spoke first, and said that a Christian should not remain amongst them; and the others loudly repeated what Haco had said. They called upon their father to send Ivo away from under his roof. Ivo stood waiting patiently to hear what his father would say. Harold told him to depart; and then he turned to go away. Verena was following him; but Harold cried out that he would not part from his daughter; and Ivo looked back to her, and told her to stay and attend upon their father. She then went close up to old Harold, and entreated him at least to allow her time to take leave of Ivo. He answered, that she might go with Ivo as far as to the great lime-tree at the foot of the mountain, that there she might take leave of him and then return: so Ivo and Verena went out together.

When Ivo and Verena stood side by side

under the great lime-tree, she asked him where he would go; and he said that he would go to the island in the lake, where he first saw the snowdrops, and live there by the martyr's grave. He set himself to comfort her, for he saw that her heart was sinking at the thought of letting him go thus alone and friendless; she would not have kept him from doing what was right; she was glad that he had confessed his faith so boldly, and she wished him to persevere; but yet she did not know how to take leave; she rested her head on his shoulder, and seemed hardly able to raise it up. Ivo told her that no more had happened to him than he well knew was likely to happen, when he came home to confess his faith; he reminded her what an honour it was to suffer as a Christian; and then he begged her to take care of their father, and to keep good heart, and perhaps they might meet even there again in peace; but whatever might happen on earth, they would hope to meet in heaven. He begged her to pray for him; and he told her, that at the hour, every night and morning, when they used to meet for service in the Christian chapel, they might still say those prayers, and think of each other and of their fellow-Christians, and believe that the gracious promise of their Saviour would be fulfilled to them, though they were obliged to be absent from the common

worship,—“Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” Then he asked her to kneel down by him on the grass, and to repeat the Lord’s prayer with him ; and then they stood up and said the Belief together ; and after that she felt more able to bear the parting.

Whilst they still stood there together, old Rolf came down to them : he was grieved to see Ivo driven away from his father’s house ; but he lost no time in lamenting it ; he had been busy in providing all he could for Ivo’s journey. He brought his horse to him, and at the same time he brought him some food to take with him, and a large bear-skin, which Ivo had once taken from a bear that he killed in hunting ; he brought him also his bow and arrows, and his light boat, which he could carry across his shoulders. Ivo thanked his faithful old friend with all his heart, and then looked at his sister, to see if she had courage now to let him go. Verena understood his look, and resolved that she would not make his heart fail by her weakness ; she stepped forward to him firmly, gave him her last kiss, and said, “Go, Ivo ; and God bless you !”

When Ivo had ridden a little way by himself, he began to feel more courage than he

had done whilst he was taking leave of his sister ; his heart beat fast, but it was more with hope than with fear—he felt so sure that all the promises which he had learnt out of God’s holy word would be fulfilled to him, if he was but faithful. He saw the stars shining bright over his head, and he thought with joy how much happier he was now, than when once he looked at them, and did not know how to pray to their Maker. Then, indeed, he was returning to live safely under his father’s roof ; but it seemed better to him to have no earthly house, and to know that the God who made the firmament and placed the stars in it, was the same God who had promised to be a Father to him. He thought of the history which had been told him, of Jacob travelling alone, a wanderer, as he was, from his father’s house ; and how Jacob lay down to sleep, and saw the angels of God ; and he knew that the angels of God would be around him, though he could not see them, for he knew that they minister to the heirs of salvation ; and he had been made an heir of salvation by his baptism. These thoughts made Ivo feel light-hearted and free from care ; he repeated to himself that Christians are not to take care for their food and clothing, but to trust to their Father in heaven, who feeds the birds of the air, and clothes the lilies of the field. He knew

that Christians must be ready to forsake all, —father, and mother, and brethren,—in order to shew their love for that gracious Lord who had forsaken all for them,—who for their sakes had borne the cross, and had suffered even to death; and it seemed not much to be required that he should take up his cross, and follow his gracious Saviour, who had not where to lay His head when He dwelt among men.

So Ivo looked up to the bright stars with a firm faith and with a hopeful heart, and he looked down on the earth and wondered at the infinite mercy of his God, who had left that glorious heaven to live with men below, and who was now returned again to prepare a place for all His faithful followers.

The stars were beginning to grow pale, and long streaks of light were appearing in the eastern sky, when Ivo approached his island; he dropped his boat into the water and jumped into it, and then leading his horse, and making it swim by his side, he crossed over to the island. He left his horse to range at liberty when he had landed there, drew up his boat into a little hollow in the green bank which sloped down to the lake, and then knelt down beside the martyr's grave, and prayed earnestly; he had learnt a prayer suited to the return of daylight, and that he repeated, and some verses of the

Psalms; and then he poured forth his heart before God, with all its fears, and hopes, and sorrows, as he had been told he might do, and concluded all by asking to be heard in the name of Jesus Christ.

When he had done this, he took some of the food which Rolf had given him, and then wrapped himself up in the bear-skin which the old man had so carefully hung over his horse's saddle; he slept soundly and peacefully, and when he woke, the sun was high, and the larks were singing over his head.

He set himself to build a hut; and then to sow the seeds which the Christian lord had given him,—having first prepared the ground as he had been taught to do. When his day's work was finished, and he sat down to rest, he wished that Verena were but there to see what he had done; then he thought of her earnestly; and then he turned his thoughts into prayers, that they might not be wasted, not useless to her. He thought over what he should do; and he resolved, if possible, to remain in this island, that he might be able to hear of her, and that he might not make his father and brothers more angry, by going to live among the Christians; only he meant to keep the feast of Whitsuntide at the Christian lord's castle; and he hoped that then he might be confirmed by the Bishop, and be allowed to partake of the

highest Christian Sacrament. In the meantime he resolved to mark the days, that he might count the time to Whitsuntide, and that he might observe the Sundays and do no work upon them, nor go out to hunt and fish, as he would do on other days.

Do you pity Ivo for living alone? I do not wonder if you pity him: we should none of us like to feel quite alone all day and all night, and have nobody to speak to—nobody to help us or to care for us. Ivo would not have chosen it: he thought a great deal of his home where he had always lived, of his father and his brothers. He thought of his new Christian friends, and of the time which he had spent in the Christian lord's castle; and most especially he thought of his sister Verena, who was dear to him both as being of his kindred, and as being his fellow-Christian,—so dear that she almost seemed part of himself.

Ivo was affectionate and warm-hearted, and full of love for his kindred and his friends, and he could not like to be so parted from them. Besides, he was naturally gay and merry-hearted, ready to talk and laugh; he had taken part with all his might in the sports which were the fashion of his country. You might think they were rather rough

sports, but people in those times were very fond of them; the young men used to strive together which was the strongest and bravest, and Ivo used ever to be among the foremost. Then when the strife or the hunting was over, he became gentle again, and watchful to attend upon his father, or to do some kindness wherever it might be wanted. And so he was much loved, because his voice sounded so gaily and cheerfully, and because his smile was so sweet, and because his ways were so winning and full of affection.

There was nobody to love him in his lonely island—nothing but his horse. There was nobody there to amuse him, nobody to care for him; but he knew that he was loved and cared for. I have told you already that in his gayest and most eager times, in the pleasant days of his youth, he felt as if something was wanting,—in the merry feast, where the song and the laugh were most full of glee—in the games, in the huntings, in the wars—when the eagerness and the wish to conquer were at their height,—at those times Ivo longed for something better—something out of his reach: he had found it now. He had found the Unknown God Whom he longed after; he had found the way to happiness.

He was not alone; O no! God was with him, angels were with him, and the souls of

the dead. He belonged to the true eternal kingdom of God—he belonged to the Church. Every thing around him spoke to him of God—sun, moon, stars, clouds, winds, all that he saw, all that he heard, spoke to him. Morning and evening he joined with his solitary voice of praise and thanksgiving; and he thought of his fellow-Christians offering up theirs in the house of God.

He had longed after God, and after the promise of eternal life, and he was still full of thankful, wondering joy at having found them. Besides, he had longed to be better than he was; when he felt provoked to anger, or envy, or discontent, he had felt that it was wrong, and did not know how to get instantly rid of it. He had learnt now how to get rid of such bad feelings; he felt that he was clothed in the white robe of baptism, and he trusted that by constant care, by constant washing, he should keep it white.

We were baptised in our infancy. Do we think enough what our blessings are?—those same blessings which made Ivo's heart burn within him, whilst he lived a lonely outcast, parted from all he loved, and not able to enjoy, as we do, the fellowship of Christian worship.

Do you wish to know how Ivo could find companions in those things which could not speak to him? We read in the Bible that we may learn even from things which have no voices to speak to us.

God, Who made all things, can make all things pleasant and useful to those who enjoy His favour; and we must suppose that Ivo would enjoy God's favour, because he had given up so much for the sake of keeping that which is best. Therefore things without voice might speak plain to Ivo.

You may fancy him sitting on the green shore of the lake on a summer's evening (or rather we should say, at night; for the days were grown long, and the sun did not set till *our* night); the waves are rippling up against the grassy bank with a pleasant sound—they look clear, and they catch the light of the setting sun on their edges as they come splashing up near to where Ivo sits; the cross on the martyr's grave stands up dark and large against the bright western sky; the birds are chirping their last notes before they go to roost; the boughs of the trees are rustling in the breeze. Ivo has said his evening prayers at the hour when they are said by his Christian friends; he has taken his last meal; and he now sits resting after the fatigues of the day, looking at the pleasant sights and listening to the

pleasant sounds. He looks at the trees which form an open grove behind the martyr's grave; the last red light is gleaming upon their stems, and their spreading boughs catch a light green from the sun where it reaches them, and are sunk in deep shade where they are turned from it: those stems seem to rise up to make a temple for God's worship, as the tall pillars stand in a Christian church; and the boughs spread over them, as the vault arches over the pillars of the church. The wind whispering in the boughs seems to speak God's praise, like the music of the pealing organ. Under the trees rises a clear little spring, which bubbles up among the grass and flowers, and in this Ivo sees an image of the baptismal fountain in which he had been so lately washed,—those waters of baptism which bring purity and refreshment wherever they are found. And when it grows dark, and he sees the lights playing at a little distance beyond the trees,—(such lights as were often seen when the mists were rising,)—he is reminded of the lights brought into church at the evening service, when they appear and disappear amid the darkness of the building. So far he is reminded of the Church on earth: but when he looks up to the sky, he is reminded of God's unseen kingdom; the many-coloured clouds at sunset are like pictures

and images of glorious things yet unseen. He watches the orange and gold as they fade, and he sees the pale green sky which lingers in the west, with its pure, peaceful, hopeful colour ; till at last it grows quite dark, and the stars come out in their brightness ; and they seem to speak to him of heaven, almost more than the beauty of the day had done. He thanks the God Who gives joy in affliction, like those stars in the darkness ; and then he lays himself down to sleep, secure from danger : not in any earthly shelter or protection, but in the care of Him Who never slumbers nor sleeps.

When we left Ivo, it was the beginning of the summer ;—the sun shone bright upon his lonely island, the trees spread over him with their pleasant shade, and the waters of the lake came up against the green shore in gentle waves.

Now the winter is come : the lake is frozen over, the ground is covered with snow, the trees are bare, the sun never comes in sight,—there are only a few hours of faint light between one night and the next.

Did you ever see a star on a frosty night shining in a clear sky, with mist above it, and below, the star reflected in the ice—so that its likeness in the ice was bright and

steady, not wavering as it would have been in the water?

Such a bright and steady light was seen in the ice under Ivo's island: but it was not the light from a star; it was the light from the fir-branches which Ivo was burning, whilst he said his prayers at night, close by the cross on the martyr's grave.

Ivo himself was not yet like a star; those who are likened to the stars are the saints in heaven. Ivo was only a Christian on earth, but his faith and love were steady and pure; he was one of those Christians who are said to be a light to the world, because their good works cannot be hid, and they hold forth a good pattern, a light to others—as the flame of Ivo's fir-branches shone steady and bright in the ice.

Perhaps you wonder how any body could have been the better for Ivo's good example, when he was quite alone. Ivo did not do right in order to be seen of men; no eye of man was upon him in his solitude; his prayers, his self-denial, his charity, had the praise of his heavenly Father, Who saw him in secret.

Yet his good deeds were not hidden from men; and though it was God's reward which he sought, yet he had the praise of men without seeking it; and what was better than their praising *him*, they praised his Father

in heaven when they had seen his good works.

I must tell you how his time had passed since last we heard of him. He went at Whitsuntide to his Christian friends ; and he found at their castle the bishop who was set over them, and who had come to keep the feast with them. By him Ivo was confirmed ; and then he was admitted to receive the highest Christian privilege, the Supper of the Lord, to the strengthening and refreshing of his soul.

After this, he went back, comforted, to his island, and spent the rest of the summer and the autumn there alone ; old Rolf sometimes brought him messages from his sister Verena, and told him how his father was. At the end of the summer he reaped the crops that he had sown in the spring, and he laid by his stores against the winter. He had another work to do : he built himself a little chapel, close by the martyr's grave ; and there he used to say his prayers and his psalms, at the times when he thought there was service in the chapel of the Christian lord's castle,—that, as well as he could, he might join his Christian brethren in their worship. He could not make his chapel beautiful as that was, nor could he have it consecrated and set apart for God's service by the bishop : all that he could do was

to set it apart for God's service by his earnest prayers ; and in his heart he hoped that the day might come, when his lowly chapel, built with his own hands, would be dedicated to God by some Christian bishop, and would be made to look more like a place of worship, and filled by more worshippers.

He had another employment still—perhaps you may guess what that was ;—it was reading the Bible. But reading the Bible was not such an easy thing for Ivo to do as it is for you : in the first place, there were no Bibles printed in those days ; people could only have more Bibles by writing them out over and over again ; and it was a great favour when Ivo's Christian friends gave him a Bible to take back with him : besides that, Ivo had to take a great deal of trouble to read it ; for it was not written in the way of writing that he had been used to, so it was quite a study to him to make it out ; but he thought no trouble too great that he might read the Word of God ; and he used to sit patiently trying to understand it, and thinking over all that had been taught him by the clergyman in the Christian lord's castle about its meaning.

Thus Ivo served God constantly ; but he found out a way to serve his neighbours also. The people of that country did not know how

to make corn grow, and other grain : they lived by hunting and fishing, and sometimes in the winter they were distressed for want of food. Now Ivo had been taught by his Christian friends how to make the seeds grow which they gave him, and he had got his winter stores ; and when he found that the people on the shore of the lake were in want, he gave them some of his own provision for the winter. He would give away part of his own stores, and then go out with his bow and arrows to kill a bird : he could not fish, because the lake was frozen over. He had already given away great part of what he laid by ; he was not afraid of wanting food himself, for he thought of the poor widow of Zarephath who fed Elijah, and how her barrel of meal and cruse of oil did not fail. The people whom he fed were half-afraid of him, and did not like to come to his island ; for they had strange notions about him since he became a Christian ; so when he knew that they were in want, he used to put food for them on the shore of the lake opposite to the island, and gave his bounty without receiving thanks in return.

It was Christmas-eve ; Ivo had been out to shoot some birds, and came home tired at night. He went into his chapel as usual for

his evening service, and then he laid himself down to sleep in the hut that he had built for a sleeping-place ; but before he fell asleep, it came into his heart to go again into his chapel, and pray there once more on this holy night, for he thought of the shepherds keeping watch over their flocks, and of the good news that was brought to them ; and he thought how Christians every where were now rejoicing on earth, and how the souls of departed Christians were rejoicing in their place of rest, and angels were rejoicing in heaven ; and Ivo rejoiced in his solitude, that to him also was born a Saviour, Christ the Lord.

As he went from his sleeping-place to his place of worship, he was surprised to hear a sound of steps upon the ice coming towards him, and presently a spear whizzed by him, and hardly missed him. He snatched up a log of fir-wood which he threw at his unseen enemy, who, as he could hear and dimly see, was coming towards him. The man fell, and Ivo, hearing him groan, stooped down and took up a light to see if he was wounded. Ivo found that he had been hurt by the blow, and that he had no power to do more harm ; so Ivo carried him into his hut, and stopped the blood which had begun to flow from the man's wound, and then he asked why he had come by night to try to murder him. Ivo's

enemy was surprised that he should take pains to keep him alive ; he expected that he would have killed him, for he knew that he had done a shameful as well as a wicked thing, in coming by night to throw his spear at Ivo in the dark ; it was a thing that even the heathens of that country thought shameful. However, as Ivo asked him why he had done it, he told him the truth,—that he wanted to get his winter stores ; for he said his family were wanting food : he was the eldest of many brothers and sisters, and their father was away, and they were left with their mother ; he had been out all day trying to shoot something for them to eat, and when he could not get anything, he thought of Ivo on his island, and how, if he could kill him, he might get all his stores.

When Ivo heard this, he asked the man where he had left his mother and his brothers and sisters ; and when he had heard the place of their dwelling, he laid the wounded man on his own bed of leaves, and spread his bearskin over him ; then he took some of his remaining corn in his hand, and set off lightly over the ice. The stars gave light enough to shew him his way ; and as he went, he wished and prayed that his poor neighbours might learn to know HIM who had come down from Heaven, in order to bring peace upon earth, good-will towards men. Ivo thought

it was impossible for a Christian to feel any thing but good-will. He came to the place where the man had told him that his family lived, and there he found them. The mother came to the door when Ivo knocked gently at it; but when she saw his bright fair countenance as he stood in the door-way, and saw him offering her food with such kind looks, she began to think, according to the wild notions of her country, that he was one of their gods come to do her good, and she knelt down before him. Ivo made her rise up; and he went in with her, and told her what had happened to her son, and promised to go back and nurse him till he got well of his wound, and then to send him home to her. He told her to make bread of the corn that he had brought her; and if she and her children were in want again, to come to him on his island. When he had said this, he did not stay to be thanked, but went back again.

Ivo was not so lonely on his island after this; the people who lived near learnt more and more to love and honour him.

It was the custom of those days for people to go and seek new countries for themselves, when they were tired of their own; and they used to choose a chief, who was to be their

leader, and settle the way they should travel, and be first and bravest in fighting their battles, if they met with enemies. Some of the people who lived on the shore of the lake came to Ivo, as the spring advanced, and proposed to make him their chief, and go with him wherever he liked to lead them. Or, they said, if he wished to remain on his island, they would build themselves huts there and live near him. They wished to have him for their chief; and they told him that they would listen to him, if he liked to tell them about the God whom he prayed to.

Ivo heard all that they had to say, and then he told them that he wished to make them some return for the affection they shewed him, and he hoped he could do them a great service; but first he must take a journey, which might keep him some time absent, and he begged them to wait for his answer till he should return.

Having said this, he crossed the water, mounted his horse, and set out to visit the Christian bishop who had confirmed him, that he might consult him about what he ought to do.

He had not ridden far before he saw another horseman coming along the side of the lake; and when the horseman came up with him, he knew his brother Eric. Eric knew him also, and as he was of a gentler nature than

Haco, though he had taken part with him against Ivo, he greeted his brother in a friendly way, and rode by his side, asking him questions about what he had done since he left their father's house.

"You talked to us," Eric said, "of a kingdom that was promised you; but since you left us you have been living alone upon an island, and I have heard of no followers that you have collected, no countries that are subject to you. Come with me,—I am going to the sea-shore, where a brave party of my followers are to meet me. We are going to seek new countries; and I am to be their chief. Come with me, Ivo, and you shall share in my conquests; it will be better than living in your lonely desolate island; surely, after spending a whole winter there, you cannot wish to return. You are leaving it,—return no more. Forget the vain promises that strangers have made to you, and come with me, your brother, to seek for something more real. You used to be brave and enterprising, and not to love idleness."

"O Eric," Ivo then cried, "they were no vain promises that were made to me. The kingdom which was promised to me is more real than any country which your sword can gain. I have not been living on that island for love of idleness, but that I

might strive after something better than I ever before had to strive for."

"Still, Ivo, you speak to me in riddles. I see your eyes shine bright, and your cheeks get a deeper colour as you speak; you look like one who has found a treasure,—but what have you found? I can see nothing. I am going to shew you the ships that are waiting for me, the people ready armed who are to embark with me: I will shew you the castle of a brave chief, who has chosen me to be his son, and is to give me his daughter for my wife, as soon as I return. These things I will shew you when we reach the sea-coast: what have you to shew me?"

"I have found friends," Ivo answered; "it would be unthankful to say that I am now as solitary as I was when I parted from you: but my dependence is not on them; it is not on them that I trust, when I tell you that I am not disappointed in my hopes."

"Then what has fulfilled your hopes?"

Ivo looked up one moment towards the bright sky that shone above him—he did not know how to describe, to his heathen brother, the difference between what he then was and what he had been. To him the sky overhead was a pledge of God's protecting love, the clouds were as His messengers,—and how could he express this to Eric? "I *hope*

still," he said, looking earnestly and affectionately at his brother.

"What do you hope for? What are you doing? What are you seeking?"

"I am hoping, striving, seeking for things still unseen. I am enjoying things unseen. Eric, let me tell you a history that I have read in the sacred book of Christians. There was once a man named Abraham, who was ordered by the Great God to leave his country and his father's house, and go to a land which God would shew him. He went forth, not knowing whither he went; but God guided him. He travelled through strange lands, living in tents, and moving from place to place. When he reached the country which God shewed him, God promised to give it all to his children after him; but Abraham died without having so much as a foot of land in the country which was promised him: he had no possession there at all, but a cave in the rock, where he buried his wife, and where he was buried himself."

"And was not that being disappointed of his hopes?" asked Eric; "would you be like that man?"

"Would that I could be like him," answered Ivo, "in the high and holy trust that he placed in God's promises! Greater promises have been made to me, who am more

unworthy of them. Yet is it my hope to be in a measure like him. It is my hope that I may be made the founder of a new race—their founder by teaching them, by bringing them to be adopted by God. And for my own hopes—Abraham looked forward to a world after death, where happiness will be perfect and eternal,—to that same world I look on. Not all the kingdoms of this earth could have satisfied Abraham's ambition; much less ought they to satisfy me, who am more than Abraham was, in being a Christian."

"My strange brother," exclaimed Eric, "must we part so soon after we have met? The sea is already in sight, and presently we shall come to the place where my ships wait for me. Whither are you going? But it is in vain to ask; I shall not understand your answers. When shall we meet again?"

"You have driven me from our common home," said Ivo softly, "else we might meet under the same roof under which we were both born. But I trust, Eric, that we shall meet again."

By this time they were fully in sight of all that Eric had described—the vessels, and the warriors, and high above, a tower, which was inhabited by his future father-in-law, and whence his promised wife was to see him embark, and to watch for his return in triumph.

Eric shouted aloud, in answer to the shout which was raised by his friends below when they caught sight of him; he turned to Ivo to take leave, and then hurried on to the sea-shore.

Ivo watched till all the warriors were on board their ships, and the sails were spread, and a fresh breeze carried them quickly from the land. He then went on his way, almost reproaching himself that he had taken so much time from his journey, by standing thus to gaze. He did not feel sure that he had looked so long only from affection for his brother; he thought it was partly from curiosity about an expedition, such as he had himself once thought of with the greatest eagerness. What was such an expedition compared to his present business?

The day was too far spent, by the time he pursued his journey, to allow of his travelling much farther; so that he soon afterwards dismounted and prepared to take his night's rest in a wood at the foot of the mountains.

Ivo had made his evening meal of the food which he brought with him, and had knelt down to say his prayers before sleeping, when he was disturbed by a glare of light that rose above the tops of the trees; he looked up, and saw that the sky was crimson, as if from a

great fire : he made his way to a clearer spot in the wood, and from thence he plainly saw that the castle which Eric had pointed out to him was all in flames. He began climbing the wooded hill as fast as he could in that direction ; and as he came nearer, he heard sounds of tumult and distress coming from thence.

He hurried on faster, when presently he perceived among the trees a woman running towards him ; she did not see him till she was close at hand, and then she started as if with fresh terror, and would have turned back. Ivo entreated her to stop, and to fear nothing from him ; and at the sound of a friendly voice she stood still, and pointed upwards to the burning castle, and then clasping her hands, she cried out in a tone of agony, that her father had been killed.

Ivo remembered what Eric had told him, and thought that this unhappy stranger might be his promised wife. He told her that he was Eric's brother ; and on hearing that, she clung to him, and begged him to protect her, for she was sought after by her father's murderers. When he asked her where she could best be concealed, she directed him to a cave in the rocky side of the mountain ; and he went with her there.

She went into the cave and hid herself in the most secret part ; and Ivo promised her

that he would keep watch near the entrance, and that no enemies should reach her till they had first killed him.

Here he watched during the remainder of the night ; from time to time sounds were heard in the forest, but one after another the sounds died away again ; and by the time that the morning light appeared, all was still. Ivo then ventured out to look around him. A thick smoke rose from the ruins of the castle, and hung heavily in the sky above, and a red light appeared here and there among the ruins. Every thing was quiet, and there was neither sight nor sound of any enemy — only the destruction which they had caused was visible.

Ivo then returned to his companion, and asked her whither she wished to be conducted ; and when he found that she knew of no safe refuge, he proposed to take her to his father's house, and she thankfully accepted the offer. She asked first to go to the ruins of her home and seek for her father's dead body, and Ivo promised to go with her. He went to the spot where he had left his horse the night before, and placed Guda upon it, — for Guda was the name of Eric's betrothed wife.

They went up to the melancholy spot, and they sought there among the ruins : no living creature was there ; dead bodies, black-

ened by the flame and smoke, were strewed about beneath the broken walls, and Guda searched among them for her father's. After a long search she found it, and threw herself upon it, weeping bitterly, tearing her hair, and uttering shrieks of anguish. Ivo stood by, looking at her with the deepest pity, when he saw her give way to grief without restraint, as was the custom with the heathens, who had no comfort or hope from above to soothe their sorrows, and make them patient. He did not know how to offer comfort to her about her father's death, since he had died a heathen: for though Ivo knew that there might be mercy for the souls of the heathen, yet he could not talk to her of the sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection. Whilst he pitied Guda, he thought too of his own father, and of what he himself should feel if his father died in ignorance and unbaptised.

When she had a little exhausted her grief, he came near to her and tried to soothe her; he told her that he would be a brother to her, and he promised that he would take her to a home where she should be kindly received, and might live safely till Eric should return.

At Eric's name she raised herself up a little, and cried out, that if Eric was there, she should not be so desolate. "Then come with me," Ivo repeated: "I am Eric's brother; I will take care of you." Again

she looked down at her father's dead body, and exclaimed, "If Eric were here, he would revenge my father's death. You are his brother—you say that you will fill his place: promise me, then, that you will revenge my father." At that thought she started up and seized hold of Ivo's arm, and repeated her request. "You offered to risk your life in defending me; promise me now that you will revenge my father's death."

"I cannot promise to do that," Ivo answered mildly: Guda entreated him to do it for his brother Eric's sake.

It seems shocking to us that a woman should wish to be revenged, and should think so eagerly of it in the midst of her grief; but the heathen did not know that they ought not to revenge themselves, and they thought it a duty to revenge the death of their friends; they thought they ought not to rest till they had done it. In the times we are talking of, there was no such thing as punishing offences by the laws; for if there were laws, they could only be executed by force of arms; so every body sought to do themselves right, and they did it with the heathenish feeling that I have been speaking of—the wish to be revenged.

Ivo knew this well, and he did not wonder that Guda should expect him to take vengeance for her wrongs; but he doubted

how to answer her ; for if he told her that he was a Christian, and therefore could not do it, he thought she might be afraid to go with him ; he therefore only told her, that he was on a business which required so much haste, that he could not have delayed or turned aside from it, for any thing but to protect her, and he begged of her to make haste and come with him.

She had still one request to make to him, before she would go from that sad spot, and it was a request which he could readily comply with,—that he would lay her father's body in the ground. He had no means to dig a grave ; but Guda directed him to a low vault under the castle where sometimes provisions had been kept : it was almost hid by the ruins ; but Ivo found the entrance, and in it he laid the dead body, thinking sorrowfully of the burial service which he knew the Christians read over the graves of their dead. He closed the vault and raised a heap of stones over the place ; for the people of those northern countries had a great respect for the graves of the dead, and used to mark them with large heaps of earth or stones ; they used also to bury with their dead friends any thing that they had been fond of,—such as swords and spears, or ornaments. Guda and Ivo had nothing to put into this grave, for every thing in the castle had been de-

stroyed or carried away; but Guda trusted to return some day, and pay greater honours to her father's memory. She now suffered Ivo to place her again on his horse, and they set forth on their journey.

Ivo had resolved to carry Guda at once to his father's house; for though he did not expect to be received there himself, yet he did not doubt that she would be welcome: he had heard from Rolf, that since he was sent away, Eric, who was the next youngest son, had become Harold's favourite; and he trusted that Guda would be kindly received and taken care of, for Eric's sake, till he should return.

They had not travelled far before Guda asked Ivo, what business he was bent upon which required so much haste. Being thus asked, he told her that he was going to the bishop of the Christians, who lived near them—for that he was a Christian himself.

Guda started when she heard that, and said, "Are you, then, that youngest brother of Eric, who was driven away from his father's house? Eric took part in driving him away; and you will do me some harm to be revenged on him;—where are you taking me?"

"To my father's house, as I have told

you: he will receive you, though he sent me away. I would not harm you, nor any one whom Eric loves—I do not wish to be revenged.”

Guda still looked at him doubtfully.

“It is because I am a Christian that I cannot promise to revenge your father’s death; for Christians must not seek for revenge.”

“And why not?” she asked.

Ivo doubted again how to answer her; he did not know how to tell her, in her complete ignorance, the great, high, blessed truths of the Gospel. He did not know how to tell her *what* the God of Christians had done for them, and what He had suffered, and why they were bound to love each other: he therefore only answered her, “Because their God is so good to them, and He bids them forgive one another.”

She listened to him attentively, and hung down her head thoughtfully; for the soft, earnest tones in which he had spoken sunk into her heart. “Is the God of the Christians so good?” she asked him. “Does He listen when the Christians pray to Him?”

Ivo answered that He did.

“He would not listen to me,” she went on, “because I am not a Christian.”

“Yes,” Ivo answered, “He would. He listens to all who pray to Him; for He made

all people, and He cares for all. He cared for me, and helped me when I was in trouble, and He will listen to you in your distresses."

And as Guda seemed to attend anxiously to what he said, Ivo went on to tell her about Hagar, who was so desolate in the wilderness, and how an angel of God appeared to her there, to tell her what she should do.

"Perhaps," Guda said, "you are an angel, whom the God of the Christians has sent to help me in my distress?"

"No," Ivo answered, "I am not like an angel, for they are bright and beautiful creatures, who praise God in heaven, and come down to do His will on earth when He sends them. I am only a sinful man; but yet I may be a messenger from Him, as the angels are, for He can send whom He pleases to do His bidding."

Ivo here broke off their conversation, for he saw that they had reached a sheltered place, where there was a stream of water: he proposed that they should rest there, and he spread out the remains of the food which he had brought with him, and at the same time he let his horse loose to feed.

Before Guda had finished the repast which Ivo had provided for her, she was alarmed by the howling of wolves not far off, and cried out to Ivo to be on his guard; he hastily took his horse by the bridle, that the wolves might

not seize it, and looked out in the direction from which they heard the howling. Guda followed him, fearing to be left alone.

They saw something stretched upon the ground, and seeing that it moved, they went nearer, and found a wounded man, who had hardly strength to sit upright, but who was trying to drive away the wolves that came prowling round him : it seemed as if he must soon become a prey to them. Ivo went close up to him, and Guda followed.

When she saw his face, she exclaimed that it was one of the men who had killed her father. "Leave him, Ivo," she said ; "he killed my father by treachery ; he may do you a mischief. Leave him, Ivo, and let us go." But Ivo could not leave him to be devoured by the wolves ; he begged Guda to sit down near, and wait for him ; and he went to the wounded man, examined his wound, and bound it up, as well as he was able. Then he brought some water from the stream, that the man might drink.

When the man could speak, he told Ivo that he had been thrown from his horse down a steep place in the mountain, and must have perished there but for his help. When Ivo thought that he could stand, he lifted him up, and led him a few steps ; and finding him able to walk, he took leave of him, and returned to Guda. But before

leaving him to return to her, he said, "If you have any evil action on your conscience, let this narrow escape from destruction be a warning to you to repent of it." For, he thought, though this man is a heathen, it would be well for him to repent of whatever heathens would condemn.

Guda had remained apart, for she could not bear to look upon her father's murderer. When Ivo came to her, she mounted his horse again, and they pursued their journey.

"You told me," she said to him presently afterwards, "that you would not do an injury to Eric; but you have done him an injury even now, for the men who killed my father are Eric's enemies; their anger against my father was, because he promised me in marriage to Eric, and they did not like that Eric should possess the castle and the goods, of which I was the only heir."

"If there are any who seek to do wrong to Eric," he answered, "I will willingly fight against them in his cause; but I could not leave a man to be devoured by the wild beasts. A Christian *cannot* do that."

Guda hung down her head again thoughtfully, and they rode on for some time in silence: she felt very grateful to Ivo for what he had done for her, and at the same time she felt a great reverence for him; but she was perplexed by what he said to her.

It was now almost summer, and the long days of those northern countries were coming on, so that they had many hours of daylight in which they could travel, and it was not dark when they came in sight of old Harold's castle.

Ivo's heart beat fast when they came near the lime-tree under which he had parted from Verena, and it beat still faster when he saw Verena herself standing under it, stroking and fondling some goats which he had received from his Christian friends, and had sent to her by Rolf. She looked up when she saw two travellers approaching, and for one moment she looked at them doubtfully, wondering who they were; but she quickly knew her twin-brother, and in another moment she had thrown herself into his arms.

He clasped her very close before he could speak; then he told her who the guest was whom he was bringing to his father's house, and begged her to take Guda there.

Verena welcomed Guda kindly, and proposed to go with her at once up to the castle, if Ivo would wait in the valley just beyond, that she might come down again and talk to him there. Accordingly he lifted Guda from his horse, and took leave of her; and whilst she went up to the castle with Verena, he

waited in the place which his sister had appointed.

Whilst he was waiting, he saw Haco coming down the mountain from the other side, with his hunting-spear in his hand. When Haco knew him, he stood still, and asked him angrily why he came there, and lurked so near the castle.

"You do not dare to come up," he said; "and why are you hiding yourself there?"

Ivo answered Haco's fierce and insulting questions in a mild and steady tone of voice. "It is true," he said, "that I dare not come up to the castle, because my father bade me leave it, and he has not told me to return; if he should send for me, I would go there directly, but till then I will stay away in obedience to him."

"Do you defy *my* anger?" asked Haco, more fiercely than he had spoken at first; and he shook his spear in a threatening manner.

"I do not defy you," Ivo answered, in the same mild tone in which he had spoken before, and he stood quite still, looking kindly and stedfastly at Haco. "I do not wish to raise your anger, I wish to be at peace with you, my brother; but it is in order to obey my father that I keep myself from his sight."

At that moment, Ivo saw Verena descending from the castle, and he came forward to

Haco, to speak to him before she was within hearing ; he spoke very earnestly—

“ Whatever you may say to me, Haco, use no harsh words to our gentle sister ; she has done nothing that ought to offend you. You cannot wonder if she loves me, and comes to see me, for we were children together. Let her speak to me in peace ; and when I am gone away again, be kind to her, Haco ; she is your only sister, and next to our father, who is now old, you ought to be her prop and comfort.”

Verena now came near, and laid her hand on Haco’s arm before he had time to answer Ivo. “ Do not be angry,” she said, “ I have only come here to speak with Ivo ; I will return presently, and he will go away from hence without entering the castle.”

Haco was still angry, but he hardly knew what more to say. If Ivo had answered him fiercely, or Verena had reproached him, he would have found it easy enough to say more ; but they were both quite calm, and shewed no wish to provoke him. Ivo had no appearance either of anger or fear, so that he did not know how to revile him or threaten him any more ; and as to Verena, he felt ashamed to speak harshly to her ; so that he turned away in silence, and walked sullenly up to the castle, but they saw that when he had almost reached it, he stood watching them from above.

Verena had brought some food for Ivo, which he took to supply him on his journey. They could not talk long together; but Verena was cheered by looking at her brother's countenance, and seeing its sweetness and its brightness; and he said a few words to her of trust and of comfort.

"You are my snowdrop," he said, before he left her. "You promised me hope and joy, and you have not deceived me."

And mounting his horse, he rode on to seek a shelter for the night farther from his father's castle, that he might not give more offence to Haco.

Verena stood looking after him, as long as her eyes could catch the least glimpse of his figure, which appeared dark against the light colour of the lake beyond. She felt as if she had been blessed by a short visit from an angel,—so fully did Ivo's Christian belief shew itself in his countenance, his tone of voice, and all his actions, raising and sanctifying all that he said and did, whilst he behaved with perfect simplicity, and only spoke and acted according to what he knew and felt to be right for a Christian.

Ivo performed his journey to the bishop without any more delay. The bishop welcomed him like a much-loved son, and that

kind welcome warmed Ivo's heart, coming just after he had turned away from his father's door without receiving a welcome.

He knelt down before the holy man, who was given him from God to be his spiritual father and pastor; and after asking and receiving his blessing, he told him all that had passed, and asked him what he ought to do.

The bishop kept his eyes fixed on Ivo for some moments, thinking earnestly, and not speaking; then he said to him, "My son, I will send you to be a messenger from God to your countrymen; I will ordain you to the sacred ministry: and may God bless your ministrations!"

"My father," Ivo answered, surprised and trembling, "I am too ignorant and too young."

"God can give you strength and wisdom," the bishop replied; "do not refuse the service which is required of you. Your countrymen may listen to you more willingly than to a stranger; they love you, and you may teach them to love God. I believe that you are appointed to this office; prepare yourself to fulfil it." Ivo bowed his head low, and dared not object any further.

The bishop sent for two clergymen who lived with him; and he gave it in charge to them to prepare Ivo for the office to which he had appointed him.

He ordained him deacon, and shortly after priest; and when he had kept him for some weeks with him, he sent him back to his island.

As Ivo rode back to his island, he saw the cross upon the martyr's grave rising before him, as if to guide him to the place of his new duties; and he thought of the martyr whose grave it marked, who had laid down his life in the endeavour to convert Ivo's countrymen. It had seemed as if his blood had been shed in vain, as if his preaching had left no fruit; but it was not so—his few words addressed to a boy, such as Ivo was when he met with him, had sunk deep, and were now bearing fruit; and from his blood was raised up a successor to fill his place. Whilst Ivo looked at the cross, the holy symbol of his faith, he prayed in his heart that he might be found ready to lay down his life for his faith whenever it should be required of him.

His attention was called from the silent and solemn warning which the cross held forth, to the loud welcome of his friends. They were eager for his return; and when he had been seen from a distance, and the report was spread that he was coming, they assembled joyfully to meet him on the shore, and to pass over with him to the island.

He felt that he now came among them as

something more than the chief whom they had chosen for themselves ; he came as a messenger sent to them with a heavenly commission, and as appointed to guide them in the road to heaven.

They hastened to shew him the work which they had accomplished in his absence : his little chapel had been enlarged and ornamented ; they had worked hard to complete it before he returned, and they had longed for his return since it was finished.

Ivo looked at it with joy, for he hoped that the zeal which they had shewn in building a house for God's service was a sign that before long they would become worshippers within its walls ; and he had received a promise from his bishop that he would come and consecrate it.

Ivo looked from his people to his Church, and thought of the office committed to him, to minister in holy things. That commission which was first given by our Lord to His Apostles had descended to the bishop who ordained him, and he had now a share in that commission. He was to call the people who stood round him, men, women, and children,—he was to call them all to the true faith, and when he had made them members of Christ by baptism, he was to administer the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to them.

The fear and joy of being a Christian had gone on increasing to Ivo ever since his baptism; and now they were raised still higher, and impressed still deeper, by the charge of other souls besides his own being committed to him.

His friends had much to tell him of what had passed during his absence. Haco had heard that they were busied in enlarging the church, and he had threatened to disturb their work; but first he went to make war against their Christian neighbours,—that Christian nation by whom Ivo had been made prisoner and then baptised. He went to war against them, as he had often done before; but he was defeated, and obliged to ask for peace: and when they consented to make peace with him, they made him promise that he would not disturb Ivo on his island, nor those who chose to join Ivo there. Since the time, therefore, of Haco's making peace with the Christians, they had been left in quiet. Ivo thanked the good Providence which had so ordered things, and he began earnestly to fulfil his new duties.

Ivo was sitting, one Sunday morning, near the spring which rose bubbling from the ground under the trees that shaded the martyr's grave. His eyes were on the sparkling

water, and his thoughts were on the holy sacrament of Baptism, which he had lately administered to many of his new flock. He sat there waiting for the hour of the morning service. It was a grey autumn morning. No wind stirred in the trees over his head ; the cheerful note of the redbreast was heard among the branches. A mist hung over the lake ; but as it rose, he saw the boats coming to the island, and could hear the distant sound of their oars.

Presently a female figure came towards him, and he knew his sister. It would be needless to say that he welcomed her ; she sat down by his side, and told him that their father had given her leave to come.

“ I longed to see you, dearest Ivo,” she said ; “ I longed to come to you for comfort, for advice, for every thing—I longed to look at you, and to hear the sound of your voice. You know that I always long after you. But it is not my brother Ivo alone that I now come to seek : you are that still,—my own kind, tender brother ; but you are more now—you are my priest, my pastor. I come to you, Ivo, for that which you now can give me—for the spiritual Food of a Christian, of which I have been so long deprived. May I receive from you the Holy Communion ? it was chiefly in that hope that I asked my father’s leave to come hither for a few hours.”

Ivo clasped her hand which he was holding, and drew it within his arm; then he rose, and led her to the church, where his people were now assembled. They spoke softly to each other as they passed under the trees; and when they reached the church-door, and Ivo saw his people looking with wonder at the guest whom he was leading, he told them that she was his sister; and they all greeted her respectfully.

When the morning service was ended, the congregation left the church; for of these newly baptised Christians none had yet received the other holy Sacrament. Ivo hoped before long to be visited by his bishop, and bring his flock to him to be confirmed. Ivo therefore remained alone with his sister in the church; and he received himself, and administered to her, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, in the trust that, through the infinite mercy of God, it would preserve their bodies and souls to everlasting life.

It was to both of them a most solemn and a most blessed time; and when the holy rite was ended, Ivo took his sister again under the trees, and they sat down in silence. Her hand was again clasped in his, and their hearts were too full to speak. The stillness all around was only broken by the redbreast's note, and by the low plashing of the lake against the shore. As Ivo and Verena sat

there, they felt that they were indeed united for time and for eternity; they felt that, whatever trials might yet await them, they were safe under God's gracious care; and they felt that they were joined to each other and to the Church of Christ by a bond which could not be broken.

After a time, Verena rose, and said that she must return to their father. "The time may come, Ivo," she said, "when our father shall have a share in the communion of the Christian Church. I have told you that he questions me and listens to me concerning our holy religion. You will pray for his conversion."

"Morning, noon, and night, I pray for it."

"And now give me your blessing, Ivo, and let me go."

Ivo blessed her, kissed her, and led her to the boat, where two of her father's men were waiting for her. He watched her boat, as long as he could see it on the water, and then returned to his dwelling-place.

Things were going on quietly with Ivo on his island, when one day Rolf came to him to summon him to his father. Harold had desired to see him; and Rolf brought him the message with a mixture of hope and fear,—for he wished that Ivo should return and be reconciled to his father, and yet he feared

Haco's violence. Ivo could not doubt for a moment: he gave some parting directions to his friends on the island, and got into the boat which had brought Rolf to him.

As they approached Harold's castle, the old man became more and more fearful of meeting with Haco, and of his coming to oppose his brother's return by force. Ivo had no companion but Rolf, and had no arms with him; for since he was ordained by the bishop, he had left off carrying arms, because he did not think them suitable to the character of a Christian minister.

Rolf asked him what he should do, if Haco attempted to stop him. "I *must* go on to my father," he said, "unless Haco should kill me; and may God keep him from doing that! for it would be dreadful that he should stain his hands with his brother's blood."

Rolf shuddered, and Ivo consoled him by saying, that however Haco might threaten, he did not believe that he would raise his hand against him.

They reached the castle without any hinderance, and found all still: the door was not guarded; and Rolf took Ivo at once into the room above, where his father lay sick. When they entered, they found Harold raised up on his bed, with his furs wrapped and piled round him. Verena sat by his bedside watch-

ing him, and on the other side of her sat Guda.

At the foot of his bed stood his eldest son Haco, and his two next sons, Swerker and Hagen ; some of the people who served and obeyed Harold were standing further off. Rolf took his place among these ; and Ivo advanced to the foot of the bed. His brothers looked at him with displeasure, but they said nothing ; and Ivo knelt down, with his eyes fixed earnestly on his father. Old Harold returned his son's earnest look, and then raised himself a little, and drew his breath to speak.

In his younger days Harold had been a brave and successful chief ; he had been much thought of, and praised, and honoured, and none dared to contradict him ; but since he grew old, he had taken little trouble, and he had let Haco manage things as he pleased.

Now, however, the old chief roused himself ; and in his decline he shewed for once all the vigour of his younger days.

He had been speaking to the three sons who were with him, about their sharing his property ; he had told Swerker and Hagen that they must honour Haco, who would possess his castle, and be chief among them, as being his eldest son. He had told them this before Ivo came. When he saw Ivo, he

proceeded to speak to him. "Ivo," he said, "to you I leave my dearest treasure. I have left my castle, my lands, and my goods, to your brothers,—to you I leave my only daughter. When I am dead, Verena is your charge. Take her, Ivo; and may she be to you a comfort, such as she has been to me. She will be a greater comfort to you, for you deserve her better. Take care of Guda also, till Eric returns. And now, my son, tell me if you can forgive me, for I need your forgiveness. Verena tells me that you will; she says that Christians forgive all those who do them wrong, and that you will not delay to forgive your father, who has cast you out. Is it so?"

"My dearest father!" Ivo cried. He could not say more, and his father did not require more to assure him of his answer.

The old chief went on: "Tell me also that you will live at peace with your brothers, and never take revenge for any wrongs that they may have done you."

"I promise to live at peace with them."

"Give him your hand, Haco, in sign of peace and friendship."

Haco hesitated.

"Give him your hand," Harold repeated, in a more commanding tone—"I charge you to do it, as you would not bring your father's curse upon your head."

Ivo, still kneeling at the foot of the bed, looked up at his brothers, who stood by him.

Haco stepped forward to him, and held out his hand, proudly and slowly. Ivo took the unwilling hand, pressed it in both his hands, and said, "I promise to pay all honour to you as my eldest brother, and as filling my father's place; and I promise never to do you hurt or wrong, but to serve you as far as I am able."

Haco then drew back; and his two next brothers each gave their right hand to Ivo, in pledge of peace.

"Remember, my sons," Harold said, "whichever of you shall break that plighted faith, shall bring his father's curse upon his head."

They all stood silent, till Harold spoke again: "Now, Ivo, rise. I am told that you are a messenger from God, and I speak to you now, not as my son, but as my teacher. I ask of you if I may be baptised, and become a Christian."

Ivo stood up, as his father had bid him do; and then asked of him if he believed all the articles of the Christian faith.

"I do believe," the old man answered. "I believe all that Verena has taught me,"—and he turned to her, as if wishing her to speak for him. Verena did not speak; but

she looked at Ivo, to confirm what their father had said.

"I believe all the articles of the Christian faith," Harold repeated; "and it is my desire to receive baptism."

"I am ready to baptise you," Ivo replied.

"If any here present will receive it with me, let them stay. If there are any who will not, let them depart."

Harold spoke this in so firm a tone, that his elder sons dared not answer. One by one they turned away, with a sound of murmuring, but with no distinct words. All the rest who stood behind them followed, except Rolf; and their steps were heard fainter and fainter as they descended the stairs.

When all was quiet again, Harold spoke to the few who remained with him: "Who are these here who will receive baptism with me?" Guda rose and came forward to Ivo, and asked if he would baptise her; and then Rolf drew near, and made the same request. Ivo looked to Verena, and read in her countenance that these also were her converts, and that she agreed to their request. It was her care to bring water for the holy rite; and when she had brought it, Ivo came to his father and baptised him; and after him, he baptised Guda and Rolf.

When this was done, he knelt down close

to his father and asked his blessing ; and then he let the tears run down, which he had restrained whilst he was fulfilling his sacred duties. The old man laid his hands on his son's head, and when he had done it, he sunk back exhausted, but with a look of peace upon his countenance.

Ivo repeated aloud the prayer for the dying ; and the others knelt by the bed-side. Harold spoke no more : he sunk by degrees into a heavy sleep, and before long he ceased to breathe. Ivo closed his eyes ; and they all knelt again and prayed round his bed.

Thus the night passed. When morning appeared, Ivo rose ; for he judged it right to carry Verena and Guda away from the castle, before his brothers returned. Rolf asked leave to go with him to his island, and Ivo committed Verena and Guda to his care, that he might convey them to the island. Ivo went with them to the door, and then, promising to follow them soon, he turned to go again into the castle. Verena clung for a moment to his arm, almost without knowing what she did ; and Guda entreated him eagerly not to part from them.

"I will follow you," he repeated softly to Verena ; and she let go his arm and walked on. Guda entreated him not to leave them. "I must fulfil all my duties here," he said ; and he said it in such a serious tone, that

Guda dared not ask him any more to go with them.

Ivo returned to the room where lay his father's dead body, and watched by it till his brothers returned there. When they found their father dead, they stood in silence, looking upon him. "We will bury him with all the honour we can pay him," Haco said. After a while, he added, "Ivo, will you go with us to the burial?"

"I would wish to go with you, and to do honour to my father. But when you bury him, will you do nothing in worship of the gods whom he used to worship?"

"We will bury him after the manner of our forefathers," Haco answered; "*we* will not cease from honouring our father's gods."

"Our father died a Christian," Ivo answered.

His brothers told him angrily, that their father did not become a Christian till he was old and sick, and his strength and wisdom failed him; and as they now began to speak reproachful words, Ivo left them. They suffered him to depart without interruption; and he followed Verena and Guda to the island.

Ivo's elder brothers had buried old Harold after this manner; they had made his grave on

the highest part of the mountain, on the side of which their castle stood, and they had buried his weapons of war with him. Ivo had not dared to attend the burial, lest any heathenish customs should be observed : but he determined to read the Christian burial-service over his father's grave ; and Verena and Guda begged him to take them with him.

They chose a day when their brothers were to be absent from the castle, that, if it might be, the holy rites should be performed without disturbance ; and taking Rolf with them in the boat, they landed at the foot of the mountain, on the other side from where the castle stood. They climbed the mountain-side, and came to the heap which marked their father's grave ; and they mourned over it with the still and peaceful sorrow of Christians.

Ivo and Verena stood together, hand in hand, weeping, but not as those who have no hope ; for their father had died in the faith of Christ. Guda, too, wept for Harold, who had received her as his daughter ; but she wept quietly, as they did. And old Rolf had learnt to sorrow as a Christian for his aged master.

When they had stood thus for a time, Ivo began to repeat the funeral service ; and his three companions joined him in it.

When he had finished, a man came forward from behind the clump of fir-trees that stood above the grave. It was Eric. "Guda, have I found you!" he exclaimed; and then he looked at Ivo and Verena. "It all seems to me like a dream," he said, when his brother and sister embraced him. "I return home, and find my father dead; and Guda, whom I thought lost, is here; and I have heard words such as I never heard before. What is all this? Where am I?"

"You are with your brother, your sister, and your wife," answered Ivo, "and with this old and faithful friend," pointing to Rolf. "You are with Christians; and you have heard the words of Christian faith spoken over the grave of our father, who died in that holy faith."

They heard at a distance Haco's hunting-horn. "Come with us to our home," said Guda, stepping forward and taking Eric's hand; "and you shall know all." He complied with her desire, and went down the hill with them to their boat. As they went, Guda walked by his side, telling him what had passed; and before they got into the boat, she had made known to him what pressed upon her mind,—that unless he became a Christian, she could not be his wife. He would have reminded her of her promise. She told him that she was ready, quite ready

to fulfil it, when he had received baptism, which she earnestly invited him to receive ; and fearing lest he should urge her more, she stepped into the boat, and sat down by Verena's side.

It was a peaceful evening. The rich autumnal colours of the woods were reflected in the still lake ; and as the light of the sun died away, the moon shone out upon the water.

Eric sat thinking over all that he had just seen and heard, and recovering himself from his bewilderment. He had much to think over. All the hopes, of which he had spoken to Ivo when he last parted from him, had been disappointed. His followers had quarrelled among themselves, and disobeyed him ; and his enemies had come upon them, and destroyed most of them. He had returned alone and defeated. When he landed, he had found the castle of his intended father-in-law destroyed, and Guda lost. He had hurried to his home ; and when he reached his father's grave, the sound of Ivo's funeral-service came to his ears. It spoke of hope and joy, as Ivo had spoken,—and it spoke of them over a grave. Eric was humbled in spirit, and better disposed to receive those sayings which had perplexed and offended him in his prosperity, when he was filled with earthly hopes. He was grateful to Ivo

for preserving Guda to him, and he was eager to secure her for his wife.

When they landed on the island, Verena and Guda retired into their dwelling-house. Eric stood by the fountain ; the moon sparkled brightly on its clear water.

"Oh, Ivo," he cried, when he had looked on it for some moments—"bathe me in that pure water ; let it refresh my weary spirit, and make me pure as it is itself. Guda tells me that water can make me fresh in spirit, can give me new life. Give me that water of baptism,—it is here at hand."

"What Guda has told you is true, dear Eric," answered Ivo ; "the water of baptism can do this, and happy are those who receive it. But it must not be received hastily, not without thought. Look up, Eric, at that cross, which rises so darkly and solemnly against the clear moonlight sky. It is a symbol of pain and shame. It is the symbol of a Christian. You must not shun it, if you receive baptism."

"Ivo, I do not fear pain ; and shame has fallen upon me already.—I have been betrayed and disgraced. I will not shun the cross. Let me be baptised."

"I know that you do not fear pain,—I know that you are brave and resolute. I will believe that you may be tutored to bear scorn. Yet, Eric, you must think, before

that holy sign is marked upon your forehead. It will bind you to renounce your own self-will, your pride, your ambition. Every proud, angry, covetous feeling must be restrained when you have been signed with the sign of the cross. From that sacred moment till your death, all must be restrained, curbed, crucified. My brother, I do not wish to discourage you, but I must warn you of what you take upon yourself. With the blessing there is a vow."

"You speak hard words to me, Ivo. Yet Guda spoke of peace and joy in that pure stream of baptism. She spoke of new life. How is all this?"

"It is a new life to which you are invited, —a life of joy, and peace, and hope. But it is a life in which your old self must be destroyed, —and that cannot be without a struggle."

"Ivo, I long after this new life: I am weary of myself; make me new. I will believe all that you teach me—I do believe already that you have found the truth."

"Will you listen to the truth now?"

"Now, instantly."

They sat down together by the spring; and Ivo spent the remainder of that night in teaching him.

The next morning, Guda begged to speak

with Ivo. She told him that she had promised to marry Eric, and she desired to fulfil that promise; but she did not know how she could, till he became a Christian.

“When I made the promise,” she said, “I did it willingly; for I believed that I should gain in Eric a protector, who was strong to defend me and take care of me; and who was affectionate, so that he would treat me kindly and tenderly. But since then, Ivo, I have found a Protector, who is more strong to protect, and more loving to shew kindness, than any earthly protector can be. I have learnt to depend on a heavenly Lord; and I have become a member of His Church. I have heard, too, the solemn words that are spoken of His union with His Church (Eph. v.). How can I now unite myself to one who is not a member of Christ?”

Ivo encouraged her to pray earnestly that Eric might turn, in heart as well as words, to the true faith; and he applied himself again to instruct him. He earnestly desired his brother's conversion; but he feared lest his change should be too hasty,—lest he should be feeling a wish which might not last, and not duly consider the importance of professing himself a Christian, and receiving baptism.

Ivo had gone on for several days with his instructions, and was still doubtful whether

Eric was prepared to receive baptism, when he was relieved from his doubts by the coming of his bishop, to whom he could refer the question.

The bishop came, as he had promised to do, to consecrate Ivo's church ; and a joyful day was that in Ivo's life on which the ceremony was performed.

The bishop consecrated the church, and then a space of ground round it for the churchyard, which took in the martyr's grave ; so that the Christians who should hereafter be buried there, would repose near the first Christian who had there been laid in the ground, after giving up his life for his faith.

After this, the bishop confirmed the Christians whom Ivo had baptised, and administered to them the Holy Communion, in which he was attended upon and assisted by Ivo, and by the clergymen who had come with him.

The following day, Ivo consulted him as to the baptism of Eric ; and when the bishop had examined the new convert, he consented to his receiving baptism. When that had been done, he was solemnly married to Guda, after the Christian form, in the newly consecrated church ; and they were united and blessed in the Name of the Holy Trinity, in Whose Name they had been baptised.

Ivo had still a favour to ask of the bishop.

He asked if he could not now leave some priest there, for several had come with him on his journey, who might govern this newly planted Church ; and he offered to obey and assist such an one.

But the bishop told him that he trusted to him to govern the Church which he himself had founded on this island, and that he would leave with him a deacon, to be his assistant and companion in his labours. There was a young deacon who wished to remain there ; and the bishop left him behind, when he said farewell to his new flock, and departed.

Whilst Ivo was thus established in his office, and set over the Christians on the island as their spiritual pastor, he gave up to his brother Eric the office of being their chief. They promised to obey Eric, to follow him to war, if there was need, and to be faithful to him and to his children after him. This they promised solemnly in the church ; and Ivo was witness to their promise. Eric promised on his part to govern them justly, to watch over them carefully, and to fight for them bravely.

It looked as if Ivo had now got all that he could wish, except, indeed, the conversion of his elder brothers ; but on his island all was settled to his contentment, and all seemed to

be arranging itself after the model of a Christian Church. Ivo was looked up to and loved by all who were around him ; his own dear sister was by his side, as his companion and counsellor ; his holy building, where he had worshipped when he was alone and it was unconsecrated, was now consecrated to be God's Own House, and was filled with worshippers, among whom Ivo ministered ; and the people, who had chosen him to be their chief, were paying obedience to his brother. Ivo acknowledged all this thankfully. But we know that it is not meant for any on earth to have *all* to their mind—that is kept for heaven. Even if a man can govern himself so strictly, and trust in God so faithfully, as to be perfectly in peace in himself, yet still he must see others around him who do not so, and he must be troubled for them. Especially a Christian minister can never hope to be at rest from such cares: he has a flock given into his charge by God, and he watches for it as one who must give account ; if his flock wander at all from the right way, he must be troubled by it.

Ivo now saw none but Christians around him ; but, alas ! all Christians are not such as they promised to be at their baptism : they have not really renounced all the works of the devil, “the vain pomp and glory of the world, with all covetous desires of the

same, and all carnal desires of the flesh, so as not to follow nor be led by them." Even Eric, Ivo's own brother, had not truly renounced them all. You will ask, perhaps, if Eric was a hypocrite when he professed himself a Christian? Alas! what are you, what are all of us, when we call ourselves Christians at church, when we repeat the Belief, and join in the Prayers and Collects, which speak the language of real Christians? Are we all hypocrites? I hope we are not. But yet, can we say, when we question ourselves, that we have renounced *all* covetous and carnal desires, so as not to follow nor be led by them? I hope we are not hypocrites. I hope we really mean to be Christians, not only in name but in deed; but I am afraid we have, all of us, a great deal to do, before we think, and speak, and act like Christians, all day and every day.

Here and there we may see one who seems to have really put on the full Christian character; who seems to have made the baptismal garment fit so close, that it is like part of himself, that he is "clothed with humility" and all other Christian graces. Perhaps we may see here and there a man who is quite devoted, heart and soul, to the service of his God, who fears nothing in that service, who is ready to give up every thing, and to suffer every thing—like Ivo. Here and there we

may see a woman, whose heart is set upon heavenly things, who is mild and gentle, pure and devout—like Verena. But often we cannot see and distinguish such persons—for they are modest and retiring, and we may be blind ; yet God sees them, and owns them for His true saints. They are not *perfect*, of course, not perfect like the angels—for none are perfect on earth ; but they are going on “unto perfection,” and they have brought themselves, their spirits, souls, and bodies, into subjection to the Gospel. But these are few compared to the many, who may have *some* Christian graces, but not *all* ; who sometimes act right, but sometimes wrong ; who live as they see other people live, and not after the pattern of Him by whose name they are called.

We were all baptised in our infancy. That blessing was granted us before we could seek for it ; but since then we have had opportunities of seeking God’s grace. And when persons come to be confirmed, they know what they mean when they answer “I do,” to the bishop’s question, whether they renew the vow made in their name in Baptism. Some persons say those two solemn words carelessly, with very little thought of what they then engage themselves to do. Others say them earnestly and seriously, but do not keep them in mind when they leave the

church. Others, again, may bear them in mind sometimes, after they have gone back to their common employments. But some say them in joy and trembling, kneel down before the bishop with humble, fervent hearts, and leave the church with a settled purpose of bearing their vow always in mind. At home or abroad, at church or in business, they never forget it; and they make the most of every occasion to build themselves up in their Christian faith.

Such an one was Ivo ; but Eric was rather one of those persons who mean to be good Christians, but who cannot bring themselves to be Christians throughout, who have unchristian tempers still within them, and suffer these often to get the better of them. I am afraid most of us are more like Eric than we are like Ivo. Let us now go on to hear their history ; for perhaps we may learn something from it.

You remember that Haco was very jealous of the people who lived on the island, and he was not less so when Eric became their chief ; he rather grew more jealous : he was afraid, indeed, to disturb them on their island, for he dared not yet break the engagement that he had made, to leave them in peace there ; but if ever they landed on the opposite shore, he and his people insulted them, and tried to drive them away.

Some of the new Christians could not bear this patiently ; they returned railing for railing, and even blows for blows, and they would not forbear to land on the shore, lest their neighbours should think they were grown cowardly.

Eric too was afraid lest he and his people should be despised ; and Ivo could not yet bring him to feel that highest courage, of not fearing men's judgments—of serving God stedfastly, and not caring what men might say of him. Ivo, therefore, expected every day that there would be an open quarrel, and perhaps a war, between Eric and Haco. With Haco he could do nothing to prevent this ; but with his Christian brother Eric he earnestly tried to prevail, and to bring him to a meeker and more Christian spirit.

One evening Guda came to Ivo, looking more sorrowful than he had ever seen her since he first found her in her distress ; yet her sorrow was not of the same kind that it was then, for then she was fierce and revengeful whilst she grieved : now she came in gentleness, desiring to preserve peace. She told Ivo that Eric had that morning met with Haco, that high words had passed between them, and that they had agreed to meet again on the shore opposite the island, each

bringing an equal number of warriors, that they might decide their quarrel by arms. When she told this to Ivo she wept bitterly; and she begged him to come with her to Eric, that he might persuade him not to keep such an engagement. She herself had tried in vain to persuade him; but she had hope that Ivo might succeed.

Ivo heard this news with more sorrow than surprise. He hastened with Guda to the house where she and Eric lived. He found Eric sitting alone by his fire, with his eyes fixed upon the burning embers. He did not look up nor speak till Guda came and laid her hand softly on his arm, and said, "You would not listen to me, Eric; but Ivo is come to you—you will hear him." When she spoke thus, he looked up suddenly to her for a moment, and then cast his eyes towards Ivo; but he bent them again on the fire, without speaking.

Ivo came close to him. "Yes, you will hear me, my brother, because you know in Whose Name I am commissioned to speak to you. Your very affection for Guda might perhaps make you fear to listen to her, because you might think that she spoke from care for your safety. But I speak now to you, my brother, in our Master's Name; and I tell you that you have spoken words which should be unsaid without delay. You bow

your head before that holy Name !” (for so Eric had done). “ It is enough : if I can serve you in any way, if I can carry from you a message of reconciliation to our brothers, you have but to command me.”

“ I cannot unsay the words that I have said. I will fulfil those words.”

“ O Eric !” Guda cried.

“ You have spoken words which you cannot fulfil,” said Ivo. “ Do not thus vainly grieve your wife, by repeating that which was at first hastily said.”

“ I cannot fulfil my words !” said Eric, turning fiercely round. “ Dares any man to say that Eric, the son of Harold, will break his engagement ? that he cannot keep it ?”

“ Ivo, the son of Harold, says, that Eric will not keep an engagement which it was sinful to make. You *cannot* keep it, Eric ; for you are a Christian. Would you renounce your Baptism ? Did you not *then* make a promise more sacred and more binding than all others ?”

Eric’s head was bent down again, when he was thus reminded of his Baptism ; and he spoke in a lower voice when he said, that no vow which he had made at that time would oblige him to bear insults tamely.

“ Did you not receive the sign of the cross upon your forehead ? and what does that sign betoken ?”

Eric looked up at his brother, but he shrunk before that ardent and imploring look which Ivo fixed upon him,—before that countenance which was so young, and bright, and soft, but which at this moment, in its youth, and brightness, and softness, seemed to him the countenance of a reproving angel.

“Speak, Eric,” said Ivo; “will you renounce the Master Whose Sign was marked upon your forehead? Are you no longer His soldier and servant—you who had promised to be faithful to Him to your life’s end?”

“I do not renounce,” Eric murmured faintly.

“If you are indeed the servant of a crucified Lord,—if you do confess the faith of Christ crucified, can you say that you will not bear insults? O Eric! think of that which from my lips you learned—think of what your Lord once bore.”

Eric put his hands before his eyes, and was silent. Ivo, though he watched him eagerly, could not see whether it was to hide his tears that he had covered his eyes.

Just then Verena came in: she knew nothing of what had passed; she came to seek for Ivo, because it was time the evening service should begin, and he had not appeared at the church. She came with her usual look of peace, but she perceived quickly that something was amiss; she approached

gently to Eric, and asked him if he was ready to come to the church,—for, as she saw that he was troubled, she thought within herself that in church he would find repose of mind. He did not answer her, nor move from his place.

“ You may find guidance and peace in our holy home,” said Ivo ; “ come thither. I do not say, come with a proud, revengeful feeling, but leave that feeling at the door of the church, and come in to kneel before our God.”

Eric turned his head away, and did not rise from his seat. Guda burst into a flood of tears. Verena’s countenance had changed to sorrow, and she stood pausing. Ivo whispered to her to come to the church, and pray there for Eric ; and she put her hand within his to go with him. Guda doubted whether to follow them or not ; but Eric bade her go, and she went, still weeping.

It was the eve of St. Thomas’s Day ; and it was the custom of Christians in those times to observe the eve or vigil of a festival, (which you may see marked in our Prayer-books,) by watching in the church the night before.

Accordingly, Ivo and his Christian flock observed this night-service ; and Eric was left alone.

He grew restless after they had left him ; the wind blew cheerlessly against the walls

of his house; and his own heart was more cheerless and more stormy than the night. He got up and went into the churchyard. The cross stood there with its silent warning; it reminded him of all that Ivo had said when first he asked for baptism. He could not say that Ivo had deceived him; that more was required of him now than he had been prepared to expect when he had made his baptismal vow. It had been his own earnest request that he might receive baptism; he had not been persuaded to it. The stream which then invited him to wash and be clean was frozen by the wintry season; he no longer heard its rippling sound. All was silent, except the wind through the leafless branches, and the voices from within the church. They joined in supplication, but Eric could not bear his part in it: he knew on what condition the prayers of Christians are heard—on the condition of forgiving their enemies; and he had not forgiven his brother Haco. He wandered alone and desolate; all was dark around him, whilst a light gleamed from the church: he almost longed to go in, to kneel down at the entrance, and cast away his load of anger and pride, and then to join with the other worshippers; but he could not resolve to do it.

He lingered till the congregation came out, and then stole back to his dwelling; but he

could not return unperceived by Ivo. Ivo followed him with the watchful love of a brother and a pastor. He clasped Eric's hand earnestly, and said in his ear, "Return, repent. Do not lie down to sleep till you have repented. Dearest Eric, hear me. If I urged you too hastily this evening, if any thing in my words offended you, forgive it now. I may err; but turn to Him Whose servant you have bound yourself to be—turn to Him in repentance. Your own conscience tells you that you have offended Him."

Eric made no answer. He withdrew his hand from Ivo's, and went into his house.

Three sorrowful days passed. Eric's conscience did tell him that he had offended, but his pride forbade him to yield. It was on Christmas eve that he had engaged to meet Haco and decide their quarrel, and for that purpose he chose out his warriors. His Christian people for the most part wondered and grieved at such an unchristian warfare; but they had appointed him to be their chief, and had promised to obey him. Ivo said nothing to them; but he did not cease exhorting Eric to depart from his resolution. Eric saw the sorrow of his wife and sister; he hardly spoke to them, but persevered in his purpose.

The day appointed came, and Eric was busy preparing his armour.

When the hour came for the accustomed morning service, Guda asked him, sorrowfully and doubtingly, whether he would not go to the church to pray, before he set out on his expedition. He answered hastily, that he could not ask for a blessing on what he had undertaken.

“No, Eric, you cannot. No blessing can attend you. Already you see Ivo’s countenance darkened towards you; his looks, so full of light and love, are sad and reproachful now, when they are turned on you. I see that you can hardly bear it when he looks thus at you. And if from him you cannot bear it,—from him who is but the messenger of God, who is but as an angel to us,—O Eric, how will you bear that day when He whom you have called your Lord disowns you; when He in Whose Presence is life turns the light of His countenance away from you?”

Eric trembled at her words, and could not answer. She feared to offend him by saying more; and they both remained sad and silent till Ivo came near: he came to make a last attempt to move his brother.

“Eric, I am going now to the church. I cannot ask you to be of the number of those whose prayers I there offer up. Before the

service is ended, you will be gone. Your warriors are ready. It may be, that I shall never see you again till that day when you must give account of this day's work, and I must give account of your soul, which was committed to my charge. Or, it may be, that I shall see you return here stained with a brother's blood."

Eric shook from head to foot.

"Farewell," Ivo said ; "I cannot pray for your success. I can only pray that you may be spared from shedding your brother's blood or your own. But whether my prayers will be answered, who can say?"

"O Ivo, pray that I may be forgiven."

"Whilst you persevere in the sin for which you want forgiveness?"

"I will not persevere. I will not go."

"Do you speak in earnest, Eric?"

"I do. Only pray for me."

"Then God be praised!" said Ivo, clasping his hands with fervent gratitude. Guda flew to fetch Verena. She was impatient to let her share this joy ; and she looked to her gentle, pious spirit, to soothe Eric, and keep him in this better mind. Verena came, and threw her arms round his neck, and rejoiced with silent tears.

"We will now go to the church," said Ivo ; "but one word first. Eric, will you send me to Haco, to tell him that you wish to live at

peace with him? Some messenger must be sent, or he will grow the more angry from your not meeting him."

Eric, humbled now and penitent, trusted all to Ivo, and desired him to do as he pleased.

"Then," Ivo said, "as soon as the service is ended, I will set out upon my journey. I trust to return in time for the holy festival of to-morrow."

When the service was ended, Ivo gave his parting directions. It was to himself a moment of deep seriousness. In his secret heart he thought his journey not without its perils. He expected to find Haco irritated by Eric's angry words, and now made proud and presumptuous by his not keeping to the appointed meeting: what he most feared was, lest he should be prevented from returning to administer the Holy Communion, in doing which his deacon could not fill his place: he could not delay his mission even a day, for he knew not what might be the effect of a day's delay on Haco. He wished only so far to impart his thoughts to his brother and sisters, as might prepare them for any thing which could happen. He took Eric apart, and asked a promise from him; and Eric was ready to grant it untold.

"Promise me, that if I should not return, you will neither come to seek me with force of arms, nor revenge me, if—"

“ If what ? Ivo, what do you mean ? ”

“ Nothing,” Ivo replied ; “ only give me your promise.”

Eric hesitated. “ I am sending you into danger, and you would have me promise not to succour you.”

“ Do not fear for me—there is no cause. Only promise me what I ask. As your brother I entreat, as your minister I enjoin, you.”

Eric made the promise.

“ And in such a case,” Ivo went on, “ let the deacon Martin go to the bishop and ask to be ordained priest, or to have some other priest sent here. When I return to-morrow, you may smile at my over-carefulness for the future.”

He took leave of them all ; he held Verena in his arms, and felt her tears upon his cheek ; he kissed them away, whispered to her to *trust*, and set off.

Ivo set out alone across the ice, with an active step and a light heart. The sadness of the moment of leave-taking was passed, and he now felt relieved from the burden which had weighed him down for several days,—the dread of sin and misery to be brought on by the rash actions of his Christian brother. Ivo felt light of heart, as he

had done in earlier years when setting out on any undertaking that had danger in it; yet he was to meet danger in a different way from that in which he then used to meet it. *Then* he trusted to his own strength and courage; *now*, to strength and courage to be imparted to him: *then* he went armed for battle; but *now* he took no weapon of carnal warfare; he had not borne arms since he was ordained; he took no armour but that which St. Paul bids Christians bear—the armour which might fit him to be Christ's faithful soldier.

When he reached the spot where the meeting had been appointed between Haco and Eric, he found no one there; only Haco's banner floated in sign of victory, and shewed that he had kept the appointment, and that he claimed the triumph.

Ivo hastened on to the castle. It was quite dark before he reached it, and the stars shone over his head. He thought of Christmas eve a year ago, when he was on his way to the dwelling of the woman whose son had tried to murder him. That night was the beginning of his intercourse with his heathen countrymen, which ended in the conversion of so many of them. What might *this* night bring forth! Ivo could only leave it in His high Hand, Who turns the hearts of all men as the rivers of waters. But he stopped under

the lime-tree at the foot of the hill on which the castle stood, and there bending down his head, he offered up a silent prayer for help and guidance.

A sound of revelry and tumult drew his notice ; it came from the castle : this night, now sacred to him as the Eve of the Nativity, was, as he well knew, observed by his countrymen as their Yule Feast, and celebrated with wild mirth. It was an unseasonable moment for his mission ; but it had not depended upon him to choose his time, and he did not now hesitate to persevere.

He quickly climbed the hill, and asked admission to the castle : he was brought into the hall, where Haco was feasting with his brothers Swerker and Hagen, and with all the warriors who owned him for their chief. Haco had been that day to the spot where he had appointed to meet Eric ; and after waiting in vain for his coming, he had returned home to triumph over Eric's fear of him, and to boast of what he would do next. When he saw Ivo, he cried out to him insultingly, to ask of him where were Eric and his warriors. " You have taught them to be Christians—have you taught them also to be cowards ?"

Ivo coloured at this taunt ; but he answered, " Christians are not afraid of men—they are afraid of the Almighty God. They are *afraid*

to break His laws," he added steadily, dwelling on the word *afraid*, which he knew his brothers scorned.

"And has Eric sent you to me to beg for peace?"

"He has sent me to tell you that he wishes to live at peace with you,—not out of fear of your power, but from brotherly love towards you."

"Eric's brotherly love towards me has come suddenly upon him," said Haco scornfully; "when last we parted, he railed at me and threatened me. Is it the custom of Christians to speak bitter words one day, and when the day comes for proving their words by actions, then to keep away?"

Ivo felt the reproach, and knew that Eric had given Haco the advantage over him; for Haco had acted consistently as a heathen, and Eric had not acted consistently as a Christian; but he answered, "It is the custom of Christians, if they have spoken hasty words, to unsay them; if they have spoken bitter words, to make up for them by words of kindness. Such words Eric sends me to speak to you. Receive them as they are sent."

"They are sent in fear," said Haco, as scornfully as before; "and I despise the sender, and him whom he sends."

As he said these last words, Haco looked

steadily at Ivo, as if to see how he would bear them.

“Haco! by our father’s memory, return some milder message! Look round at the walls of this home of ours, where we lived so many years with him. Think of his grave upon the mountain above us.”

Haco had grown more bitter against the Christians since Ivo last saw him; he had grown proud of his power as a chief, and he was now excited by strong drink. Far from being softened by Ivo’s words, he answered them with increased fierceness. “I think of our father’s last hours,” he said, “when he was turned away from the worship of our gods to your strange novelties. I remember this, and I will take vengeance for it!”

“Did you not promise him, before he died, that you would live at peace with your brothers?”

Haco did not answer so readily as before; and whilst he was silent, the golden boar was brought in, and placed before him.

It was a custom of those northern nations, and a part of their heathenish religion, that an image of a golden boar should be set upon the table at their Yule Feast, and then the warriors laid their hands upon it, and made vows of what they would do.

Haco now laid his hand suddenly upon the image which was set before him, and said in

a loud voice, "I swear that I will enter Eric's island, if he will not leave it to meet me in arms, and there—"

Before he could finish his rash oath, Ivo had darted forward and seized his hand; but he thrust him away indignantly, and began to repeat again his former words. Ivo threw the boar upon the ground, and in its fall it was broken in pieces.

There was a cry of rage from the lookers-on. Haco took up the broken pieces, and placed them on the table before him; then taking Ivo's hand, he laid it by force upon these remains of the image.

"Swear," he said, "that you will do worship to our gods, to whom this boar is sacred, or you shall pay dearly for the insult that you have done to them."

Haco held down Ivo's hand so strongly that he could not raise it up; and when he found this, he looked calmly round and said, in a clear firm voice, "I swear that I will never worship any god but the One True God whom Christians acknowledge." At these words, all the guests who sat round the table rose from their places, and rushed furiously upon Ivo. He must have perished under their blows, if Swerker had not said to Haco, "It will be no glory to you that he should die thus, rather let him be thrown into a dungeon, and you may find means to

make him worship our gods." Haco agreed to this; he ordered Ivo to be seized, loaded with chains, and carried into a dungeon.

"Do you not feel my power now?" he asked of Ivo, as they were taking him away,—"Do you not fear me now?"

"I fear but *One*," Ivo replied,—"*that One Whom I cannot see. I fear Him, and therefore I fear none besides.*"

Ivo spent the night before the joyful Christmas festival chained in a dungeon; and as he lay there, he thought of the good news brought by the angels to the shepherds. In his loneliness he repeated, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men," and offered up his solitary thanksgiving. When the light of the holy day appeared, he saw it but faintly through the roof of his dungeon; but he thought of his flock, who were celebrating that day, and joined his devotions to theirs, though he was separated from them.

He suffered much in his confinement; for Haco tried, by all sorts of harsh treatment, to force him to worship the false gods. Do you think he consented to do it? You think he would not. And why do you think this? I suppose, because you have heard that he would not do any thing else that was wrong.

When we know that a person *acts* according to the truth, we may feel pretty sure that he will be ready to *suffer* for the truth.

Ivo suffered patiently ; he did not murmur nor repine, and he did not yield to threats and ill-usage. He took patiently the wrongs that were done to him, looking upon them as a trial sent from God, either to chastise him for his sins, if in any way he had offended, or to purify his faith, and enable him to glorify God. This is the way in which people ought to bear all trials, examining their own hearts and lives, to find out any thing that would not bear the judgment of God,—even if before men they seemed as blameless as Ivo's,—and praising God for their afflictions, since He has told us in His Holy Word, that afflictions are a blessing and honour to Christians,—that through them they are made more like their Lord. As to suffering for the truth's sake, it is a thing which we do not know much of. We may even feel frightened when we think how little we can know of ourselves in this respect—how little we can answer for it, that any one of us would be willing to suffer imprisonment, or torture, or ill-usage of any kind, rather than deny our Christian faith. We stand up in church, and confess our faith in the Creed ; but Christians in old times have confessed it before heathen kings and

governors, whilst they saw the wild beasts ready to devour them. I cannot tell you *how* Ivo endured patiently, stedfastly, cheerfully ;—I can only tell you that many hundreds of Christians have thus endured, and amongst them many women and children, praising God in their prisons, like St. Paul and Silas, and suffering even to death, like St. Stephen. We do not know what the grace of God may enable Christians to bear ; but we know that such grace will only be given to those who serve Him faithfully in times of safety.

It was not long before Verena came to see Ivo in his prison. She got leave from Haco by her prayers and entreaties when she reached the castle ; and he hoped that she might persuade Ivo to worship the false gods, and be set free.

She did not persuade him to do this ; she encouraged him to persevere. Dearly as she loved him, she would much rather that he should die, than that he should commit such a sin ; for his death could only part him from her or a little while, but his sin might part them for ever. What she asked of him was, to let her stay with him and share his confinement, if it was allowed her. But he begged her rather to return to the island. " You have come to me," he said, " to be my snowdrop, my pledge of joy to come, my

token of hope. You must return to be a dove of peace to the Christians on our island. How does Eric bear my being kept prisoner here?"

"He hardly bears it. He longs to come and set you free by force; but he remembers the promise that you required of him."

"Tell him to keep it, and by so doing to prove how truly he loves me. It is the strongest proof that he can give me of his affection. Tell him this, Verena; and tell him that I still hope to be restored to you; but if I should not be restored to you on earth, I hope to meet you all in heaven. *You* can bear such words, my sweet sister. Give courage to my dear new sister Guda, and to my other friends. Send to the bishop, that he may cause my deacon, Martin, to be ordained priest, or replace me by some other priest. And, dearest, even if the worst should come, and Haco should stain his hands with my blood, remember that his sin would not be like the sins of Christians,—that it would be committed in ignorance, and that he may repent, and wash away this and all his other sins by baptism. I feel almost a trust, that whatever befalls me, Haco, Swerker, and Hagen, will all in time be brought to complete the number of our Christian family. God bless you, dearest. Pray for me; but do not grieve too much."

Ivo then was left in his solitude, when he had sent Verena away. He found a friend where he had no reason to expect one: the man who was appointed to be his jailor felt pity for him; he thought that Ivo seemed so young to be shut out from light and air, and perhaps condemned to perish. From pitying him, he came to admire him, when he saw how steadfast and fearless he was. He had tried to persuade him to worship the heathen gods, and be set free; but instead of succeeding in this, he was led by the answers that Ivo made him, to ask more about the Christian religion; and before long he entreated Ivo to baptise him.

Ivo accordingly performed that sacred office; he administered the holy Sacrament of Baptism with his hands fettered by chains,—no consecrated building around him, no congregation to join their prayers with his, no sponsors to answer for the new convert. Yet dark, and lonely, and gloomy as was the place in which the rite was performed, it brought joy and thankfulness to Ivo's heart; and he felt himself repaid for all his sufferings by being permitted to do this service to God, and to a fellow-creature during his captivity.

He had next to consider how he should advise his new convert to act after his baptism. There must soon come some occasion

on which he would be obliged to refuse to worship the heathen gods, and then to confess his conversion, and he would be in danger of Haco's utmost anger. He might fly to Eric before this should happen; but it would not become his new Christian character thus to secure himself, because he had promised obedience to Haco. It is true that Haco was not the king of the country; if he had been, Eric could not have undertaken to govern the island in the lake. There was no settled king of the country at that time, but, as I have said before, the people who established themselves in some new place chose a chief, and promised to obey him. The people belonging to this castle had obeyed Harold, and now obeyed Haco; and having promised to do so, they were bound by their promise. You know that the early Christians submitted to their rulers and governors; and such as were slaves submitted to their own masters; they obeyed them in every thing that was not contrary to their religion, and when they could not obey, they suffered patiently what was inflicted upon them. This, then, was the only advice that Ivo could give to his new convert Olave.

It was not long before Olave's firmness

was tried : he refused to worship the heathen gods on the first occasion that offered, and Haco ordered him to be shot through with spears. Haco was not less enraged against Ivo for converting Olave, than against Olave himself ; and he resolved to try a new way of shaking his brother's resolution, by ordering him to be brought from his dungeon to the place where Olave was condemned to suffer death.

This place was at the foot of the hill, close by the lime-tree which grew there. Ivo was brought out from the darkness of the dungeon, and saw the light of day again ; he did not know for what purpose he might be brought, and doubted whether this might not be the last day that he should see on earth. As he passed along, he observed some snow-drops raising their heads above the frozen ground, and he thought of the promise of hope which they had given him two years before. They spoke now of yet brighter hope, if death was near, of happiness beyond death.

He found Olave standing at the foot of the lime-tree, and Haco waiting near, with his warriors and his brothers by him, to see if Olave would reproach Ivo for causing his death. Olave came to Ivo when he reached the place, knelt down before him, and asked

his blessing and his prayers; Ivo laid his hand upon his head, and blessed him solemnly, and spoke words of comfort and encouragement to him. He shed tears whilst he spoke them, but he did not falter in his speech, for he could not repent of having guided Olave from mortal to immortal life.

When Olave had thus taken leave of his instructor, he was tied with cords to the lime-tree, and Haco, coming forward to Ivo, reproached him with the evil which he had brought upon this unhappy man: "Were these your promises to him?" he asked,—"Was it by such hopes as these that you tempted him?"

"It *was* by prospects such as these," Ivo answered; "I held out to him the hope of dying for his faith."

"Then you shall fulfil his hopes," Haco said, furiously; and thrusting a spear into Ivo's hand, he bade him throw it at Olave.

Ivo threw the spear far off, and it stuck in a young tree, which it split in two. He had once been renowned for his skill in throwing the spear; and on this proof of his strength (which he had given without thinking what he did), a shout of applause was raised by the lookers-on.

Haco was vexed by it, and he said to Ivo, "You would have done more service to your

friend, if you had struck the spear into the cords that bind him, and so had set him free."

"If I do this, will you let him go free?"

Haco answered in defiance that he would. Ivo instantly took a spear from one of the men who stood by; he took aim with a fixed and eager eye; and whilst he took his aim, he raised his heart in prayer for help.

All those who stood by watched him intently, and there was a moment's pause of complete silence: then the spear whizzed by, and Olave's bonds were cut through. A louder shout of applause than before rose from the lookers-on.

Olave felt himself free, but he stood still, looking to Ivo for direction what to do. Ivo said to Haco, "You promised him freedom?"

Haco made no answer; but his warriors shouted aloud that he had promised. Then Ivo said to Olave, "Fly to the island on the lake, and tell Eric that I commend you to him; and that I entreat him to remember his promise to me."

At these words Olave ran swiftly to the shores of the lake, and none interfered to stop him.

Haco turned to Ivo with rage, which almost choked his speech, and said, "Let him live: you shall die for him." He ordered Ivo to be bound to the lime-tree, and

called three of his warriors to cast their spears at once against him.

Ivo, when he was fastened to the tree, raised his eyes to heaven, to offer, as he believed, his last prayer. Many thoughts rushed through his mind in that short moment,—all that he had hoped to have done, if he had lived,—the grief of his Christian friends, and, most of all, Verena's desolation,—then an earnest prayer that Haco's deed might be forgiven. But when all this had passed like lightning through his mind, a deep stillness followed, and he commended his soul to the God of truth, Who had redeemed him.

He was not conscious of the delay that took place in executing Haco's orders. The warriors who had been summoned looked at Ivo, and could not bear to fulfil what was commanded them. They remembered him a boy growing up among them, to be, as they expected, their pride and honour; and at this moment they admired him more than ever, for the courage that he had shewn. They admired his calm fortitude as he stood now before them, though they could not know what thoughts gave brightness to his eye, and coloured his cheek with a glow of hope. They paused, till one of them threw down his spear, and the others did the same.

Haco, hardly knowing what he did, snatched

up one of the spears, and aimed it himself at his brother. Ivo felt a pang when he saw this, and prayed more fervently than before that Haco might be forgiven. It was with an unsteady hand that the chief threw his spear, and it only grazed Ivo's side, and wounded him slightly.

When Haco saw the spear tinged with his brother's blood, he was seized with horror, and cried out that Ivo should be unloosed. This order was executed more quickly than his former one. Ivo, as soon as he was set loose, came near to Haco, and offered to embrace him ; but the chief turned away, and bade him begone at once, and not tempt his anger again.

“ One word of kindness, Haco, before we part ;” but Haco still turned away.

Ivo then saluted the people who stood near, and who had just shewn their good will towards him ; and having done this, he took his way towards the lake. He went on slowly at first, lingering and looking back, in the hope that Haco might yet relent further than he had done, and might call him back ; for his heart yearned to be reconciled to the brother who had so nearly been his murderer, but whose purpose had failed him at the last ; and Swerker and Hagen also had let him go without a word. But his hopes were vain ; and when he came nearer to the

lake, the thought of his island hastened his onward steps. He crossed the ice which divided him from it as if in a dream, so strange seemed his return after all that had passed.

When he arrived, all the Christians were assembled at their evening service, and Ivo's deacon, Martin, now ordained priest, was about to begin it. Every heart was full of fear for Ivo; Olave had arrived with his message, and was now kneeling down for the first time in a Christian church, to pray for his benefactor's safety.

Ivo came to the door, and looked in; he could distinguish his sister, though her face was bent down; and he could fancy that she was seeking a refuge in that holy place against distress and anxiety of heart. He could see an expression of agony upon the countenance of Eric, as if he struggled hard with what he felt; and he saw Guda's deep affliction.

He almost feared to startle them by his sudden approach, but he longed to relieve their fears and acknowledge their love, and then to kneel down amongst them; and he hoped that in that holy House they would be able to bear the surprise of joy.

He entered, and Verena was the first to look up, for she had caught the sound of his step; she was the first, too, to meet him, and she hung round his neck, unable to speak.

In a moment, all had risen from their

places and surrounded him ; and when the first tide of joy was stilled, they knelt down to pour forth their hearts in thanksgivings.

Haco had not made any attempt to invade Eric's island. A great party among his followers were unwilling to assist him in it ; they said that it was not wise to provoke the Christians, and they shewed no readiness to go with him to the island. Indeed he did not find complete submission in his people, and he found less than formerly after the time when Ivo was set free. Some of his people did not like his rule, and thought they should like better to serve Eric or Ivo. Swerker then began to seek for authority amongst them ; and it was not long before he collected a party who were ready to go with him and establish themselves on another island on the lake, near to Eric's. Swerker had quarrelled with Haco about his cruelty to Ivo, and he was disposed to become a Christian, though without understanding what he was to become. He and the people who had a mind to go with him accomplished their scheme, and settled themselves in the uninhabited island. They wished to live in a friendly way with their Christian neighbours on Eric's island, and they asked Ivo to instruct them.

Ivo hardly felt sure how much he could be glad of the uninhabited island being thus occupied; he could not approve of their leaving Haco, since they were bound to him; he feared that this was an ill beginning, and he feared that Swerker sought for power more than for truth—that he wished to be a chief, independent of his elder brother, rather than to be a humble Christian. He did his utmost to teach them all they ought to know; and many of them asked to be baptised. Swerker was one of these. It was with a thankful heart that Ivo baptised another of his brothers; but still it was with a fearful heart, for he felt many anxious doubts whether Swerker came to that holy rite with a due feeling of its holiness.

These cares of Ivo's did not lessen; they increased as time passed on. There were frequent disputes and bickerings between Eric and Swerker. Swerker was the elder of the two brothers; but Eric had been first to become a chief, and he still expected to fill the first place. Ivo tried to persuade him that a Christian should not seek for the first place, nor strive for earthly honours. Eric listened to Ivo; he honoured him; he was guided by him in many things: but still his pride and ambition were not rooted out.

The summer passed away and the autumn, and the holy Christmas season came round

again; and as Ivo offered up its sacred services, he hoped that they might sink into Eric's heart, and that the lowliness of the Christian's Lord might bring lowly thoughts to his mind. He offered up the Collect for the Feast of the Circumcision ; and he hoped that Eric might mortify those worldly desires which disturbed his peace. Eric joined in the services of the Church, but yet he did not put on the spirit of the Church ; and though he had once been regenerated, he was not daily renewed by the spirit of meekness and charity. Do not call Eric a hypocrite. I have reminded you already that we are too much like him. He was not all that a Christian ought to be, who constantly attended the Christian services ; but he was better than he would have been if he had forsaken them ; and who could tell what work might be slowly going on, though interrupted by the temptations of the world and the corruptions of nature ?

Ivo watched both his brothers anxiously and lovingly ; often he smoothed the differences which arose between them ; often he admonished them each apart, and by his words of love inclined their hearts towards each other ; and often his words were helped by Verena's looks of love.

Yet still the differences continued, and there was one constant ground of quarrel.

The people whom Swerker had brought with him had several remains of heathen customs among them. They had given up their idols, but they clung to their ancient practices; and Ivo thought it best to be gentle and patient with them, and not to urge hastily their leaving these off. There was nothing actually idolatrous or sinful in them; and he hoped that by degrees they would quite adopt the Christian customs in everything, and leave off their old ones. Eric was not contented to wait. He wished to make Swerker's people behave in every thing as his own did, and follow the rules which he had laid down; and he reproached Swerker for not forcing the people whom he brought to do as his own people did. In this Eric acted from love of rule, as well as from zeal for religion; but he was encouraged in it by Martin, who assisted Ivo in his duties, who at first had been his deacon, and during his absence was ordained priest. Martin acted from a real zeal for religion, but he acted hastily, and without enough regarding or consulting Ivo. He thought it wrong that the new Christians should continue any of their old customs, and he was not willing to wait patiently, as Ivo meant to do. He therefore stirred up Eric, instead of holding him back.

At this same time one of Eric's people formed a most wicked plot against Ivo. He

was a wicked and a crafty man, and he had been severely reprov'd by Ivo for some ill conduct. Instead of repenting of his offences, he hated Ivo for reprov'g him, and he contriv'd to persuade Martin (who listened to him too readily), that Ivo himself had been present at some heathen ceremonies when he went to Swerker's island; he even went on to say, that Ivo had only escaped from Haco's rage by consenting to do worship to the false gods. Martin listened to all this, and instead of speaking to Ivo about it, he hastily determined to go at once to the Bishop and tell him all that he had heard. He took leave of Eric, and told him that he was going to visit the Bishop, but he did not tell him for what purpose; only he exhorted him to be very watchful that no heathen practices were carried on in Swerker's island.

Eric, after this exhortation, went to his brother's island, and there a violent quarrel took place, which ended in blows. Eric's followers were the strongest party, and they put Swerker's to flight, and forced them to get into their boats, and leave the island, where some of their houses had been destroyed in the struggle: they left it, and returned no more.

When Eric returned to his own island, Ivo sorrowfully remonstrated with him for what he had done, and exhorted him to follow

Swerker, and try to bring him back; and when Eric, out of pride, refused to do this, though sorry in his heart for his own violence, Ivo told him more solemnly, that till he was reconciled to his brother, he could not be admitted to the communion of the faithful.

We left every thing in confusion and distress in the island; and so it went on. Eric felt that he was wrong, as he had done before when Ivo blamed him; he loved and honoured Ivo, even for his severity; but he could not make up his mind to acknowledge his error by seeking out Swerker, and making advances to be reconciled to him. Ivo in vain entreated him to do this; and, till he should consent, refused to admit him to the holy table of the Lord, from which the unforgiving are shut out.

The spring was coming on; but spring brought no gladness to Eric, nor to Guda, who mourned for him, and entreated him to yield to Ivo. One evening, the two brothers stood together on the shore; Ivo was trying to persuade Eric to consent to what he required of him. Eric answered, that if he owned himself to have been in the wrong, his people would no longer respect him; and Ivo told him, that they would respect him more for

doing so, than for persevering in his fault; but, after all, whatever they thought, his Judge was above.

Whilst they talked, a boat came near to the shore, and two men landed from it, close to where Eric and Ivo stood. Ivo knew by the dress of one of them that he was a Priest, and hastened forward to receive him; but the stranger refused to return his brotherly greeting; he drew back coldly, and said that he came there with a message from the Bishop.

“You are most welcome, my brother,” said Ivo; and Eric too advanced towards him, but more doubtfully; for as Ivo had blamed him, he feared also the blame of the stranger clergyman, and thought he might bring a message of displeasure to him from the Bishop. Ivo had no such fault upon his conscience, and suspected no displeasure against himself. He had wondered at Martin’s sudden departure, but he supposed him to have gone to consult the Bishop as to what they ought to do in discouraging the old northern customs; and he was anxious to hear the answer, which he thought this guest might bring.

“I shall not be welcome to the *guilty*,” said the stranger, sternly. Eric applied the words to himself, and shrunk back. Ivo did not shrink, though the stranger’s eyes were

fixed reproachfully upon him, and though he now proceeded to use more distinct language.

“I shall not be welcome to the guilty priest, who has dishonoured his office, and defiled himself with idols.”

Ivo's clear eyes were still opened upon him whilst he spoke, without fear or shame; but he began to wonder at such harsh words.

“Are you,” said the stranger, “the minister of the people on this island?”

“I am,” Ivo replied; “and now the only one, for my companion has left me. I believe that he is gone on a visit to our Bishop.”

“He has been to your Bishop, and has reported your misdeeds, for which I am sent to call you to account.”

Ivo listened with astonishment and with submission; but Eric could not listen patiently. He had drawn back in fear of the reproaches which he expected to hear addressed to himself; but when he heard Ivo thus addressed, he started forward.

“Ivo's misdeeds! What do you mean? You are strangely mistaken. Either make haste to amend your error, or else get into your boat again, and depart.”

“Oh, Eric, do not speak thus!” said Ivo, earnestly. “You forget that you are speaking to the Bishop's messenger. Let us listen

to his words." And then, turning to their visitor, he begged him to explain what he meant.

The stranger repeated that Ivo was accused of great offences, for which the Bishop summoned him to give an account.

"If you have any thing to say against *me*," interrupted Eric, "speak it. But for my brother, he lives an angel's life on earth, and in my hearing no man shall dare to speak against him."

"Peace, dearest Eric, peace!" said Ivo, entreatingly. "I am not conscious of any offences such as you seem to speak of," he added to his accuser; "I know that I am an unworthy minister in my sacred office. I will go instantly to give an account of my conduct to the Bishop; and, if it pleases him, let him appoint a fitter in my place, and dispose of me as he will."

The congregation were assembling for the evening service, and put an end to further discourse. Ivo requested the clergyman to perform the service instead of him, as he was under his Bishop's displeasure; and he took his place at the lower end of the church, among the other worshippers. He felt bewildered by what had just passed, but deeply humble.

When they were come out of the church, Eric, at Ivo's desire, conducted their visitor

to his dwelling; and Ivo, before following them, stopped to explain to Verena what had passed.

“Shame and disgrace to you, Ivo?—to you!” she exclaimed.

“Yes, to me, dearest: I know not how I have deserved them—I mean, that I know not by what outward acts; but my part is only to submit.”

“I see that it is so,” she answered; “but I believe that you must be soon cleared from the reproach.”

“Holy men have suffered under reproach,” he replied; “and why should I, who know myself to be a sinful man, be impatient for an acquittal?”

Verena was silent then, and, laying her hand on his arm, she went with him to Eric’s dwelling, where he and Guda sat with their guest. Eric was speaking angrily, and Ivo saw that it was time for him to interpose; he went to the clergyman, and begged him to forgive his brother’s warmth, and to leave it to him to pacify him, and to prepare him for his own departure; then he asked Guda to shew her hospitality, and get ready her guest’s resting-place for the night. She did as Ivo requested; and having provided for the stranger’s repose, she returned to sit down with Eric, Ivo, and Verena, and to talk over these unexpected events.

“What will you do?” asked Eric of his brother.—“I shall, of course, set out to-morrow, and present myself before the Bishop.”

“Oh, Ivo,” Guda cried out, “after what happened when you went to Haco’s castle, how can we let you go from us again?”

“My kind sister,” answered Ivo, with an affectionate smile, “you need not fear such things as happened there. If the Bishop inflicts any punishment upon me, it will be only fatherly correction, intended for my good, and I trust succeeding to that end.”

“But, Ivo,” Guda insisted, “why talk of punishment—you who have never offended?”

“I know not how I have offended; but I go to submit myself to the Bishop. It is for him to decide.”

“Why should you submit to him?” Eric asked. “You are blameless; and you, who have converted the dwellers on this island—to whom I, the lord of this island submit,—what right can the Bishop have here compared to you? He has been here but once, and he has done nothing for us, compared to what you have done.

“Eric, have not I explained to you what right a Bishop has over the priests and deacons committed to his charge?”

“You have; but, after all, *you* converted us; you have suffered and striven for your own conscience-sake, and to make and keep

us Christians. You are a holy being, pure as the waters of the stream in which you baptised us,—beloved and praised by all.”

“Hush, do not speak such words. I know I am not such; and, even if I were, it is nothing to this matter. I have no power here, but as an ambassador from the Head of the whole Church. *He* sent me, by the means of His Bishop—by laying on of the Bishop’s hands I was ordained to my office: without that, no effort of my own, no pains taken by me to convert my countrymen, could have given me that office which is conveyed only by the laying on of hands. The Bishop ordained me; and if he pleases to remove me from the flock over which he set me, it rests with him, not with me,—I can only submit. But, dearest Eric, think of what I have lately said to you,—of being reconciled. Even if I should not be over you again as your minister, still the words which I spoke would not be the less true, for they were the words of our Lord. Think of them. Remember that whilst you are proud and unforgiving, you cannot be in His favour, you cannot be partaker of His Holy Communion. Therefore hasten to repent; be reconciled to your brother, and then approach the altar of the Lord. Good night; I am going into the church to pray alone, before my departure to-morrow.”

That night Eric looked again at the cross, on which the moonlight was shining ; he remembered again what Ivo had said to him the first night that he looked up to that cross ; he thought of what Ivo was doing now,—how, really and in earnest, not in profession only, he was ready to bear shame for his Lord's sake ; how he was proving himself to be a faithful soldier and servant of Him in Whose Name he had been baptised. These thoughts sunk deep into Eric's heart ; and Ivo's example did more than all his exhortations had done.

The following morning early, Ivo conversed with the clergyman who came to him from the Bishop, and who was much more inclined than at first to judge favourably of him. He agreed to Ivo's wish that he should remain and perform the service in the church during his absence ; and he directed him to where he was to meet the Bishop, which proved to be at that very castle where he had found Verena among the Christians, and where he had been baptised : the Bishop was going to perform the rite of confirmation there. Ivo set out, therefore, on his journey to this castle,—with very different feelings from those with which he had travelled thither on former occasions ; his heart was oppressed

by a load of care, doubting how he should be received, but steadfast and resigned.

The former lord of the castle had died since Ivo was there, and had been succeeded by his son, who now lived there. The mother of this young lord still lived there also,—the same who had brought up Verena; but she lived retired in her widowhood, and Ivo did not see her on his arrival. He was received coldly and doubtfully, for the rumour of the charges against him had travelled thither before him. With a sad heart, but a composed behaviour, he awaited the Bishop's coming.

All was prepared in the chapel for the rite of confirmation; and when the Bishop came, he went thither at once. He took his place near the altar, the priests and deacons near him. The young persons who were to be confirmed advanced along the open space in front. Ivo had found a place, unnoticed, among the lookers-on: he did not claim his place as a priest, till he had cleared himself from suspicion.

The service began; but it had not proceeded far before sounds of disturbance were heard from without, which caused all present to look round in surprise, and filled the more timid with terror. Loud and threatening voices were heard, and a heavy tread of feet; and Haco, with a party of his warriors,

forced his way into the chapel. He knew that the Bishop was expected there, and he formed a plan for killing or seizing him. Without any regard to the holiness of the place, he rushed on towards the altar, and his warriors with him.

The lord of the castle was not prepared for resistance, and all the Christians were astonished and dismayed. The Bishop stood quietly by the altar, towards which he had drawn back a few steps, aware of his danger, and prepared to die in the holy place.

Ivo then hurried up the steps which led to the altar, and stood at the top, before his brother and his countrymen had reached it. He stood between them and the Bishop ; and, turning towards them, he warned them back. The foremost at this time were some of Haco's warriors ; he himself was a little behind them. They stood still when they saw Ivo ; they had not expected to find him there, and they were startled. Ever since his confinement in Haco's castle, and his release when on the point of death, he had left an impression on their minds which they could not shake off—he had gained a power over them. They wondered at him, and admired him ; he was such as they had expected to see him, when they fondly watched his boyhood, and prophesied of his manhood. Yet he was so different from their expectations ; and this

likeness and this difference perplexed them. There was a tale among those northern nations of Balder the good,—the son, as they said, of one of their chief gods,—who was supposed to have lived once on earth, and governed by his goodness: a wild and untrue tale it was, shadowing out something of holy truths. That tale was recalled to their minds by the sight of Ivo,—young, and beautiful, and brave, as they fancied Balder; and they imagined that the strange power which he gained over them proceeded from his being more than a man. They did not know that he was in truth more than a man, because Divine Power was with him; because *He* was with him, who once came down from heaven to be the Lord of earth; they did not know that Ivo's countenance shone when they looked upon it because he was filled with the Holy Spirit. They gazed at him with wonder, with fear, and with love; they did not attempt to force him away by violence, nor pass him and advance farther into the holiest part of the holy building. Haco saw their hesitation, and he advanced. Ivo entreated and warned him to forbear, not to commit a crime,—not to offend the great God of the Christians; and Haco trembled. It was a superstitious feeling that crept over Haco, and held him back, as if he could not go farther. He did not think of the great God

of the Christians as every where present, as able to see him and to judge him, wherever he might go ; he thought of that Almighty God as present here, in what he knew was His own temple, and he feared that any insult offered to Him *here* might be avenged. Trembling and abashed, he gave up his furious purpose ; he turned and left the chapel, followed by all his troop.

They were not pursued. The Christians still wondered at what had passed, and the frightened maidens had not returned to their places, when Ivo descended from his post, and lost himself again among the crowd. The Bishop came forward from the altar ; the clergymen attended him as before ; and the service was completed.

When it had ended, Ivo was sought for ; he came humbly, and knelt down before the Bishop, saying that he had obeyed his orders in coming thither. The people who stood round hardly knew him, whilst he knelt thus humbly as a penitent, for the same who, but a few minutes before, had warned the heathen intruders with such boldness.

“ My son,” the Bishop said, “ was it not you who just now saved my life ? ”

Ivo answered, still kneeling, and his eyes bent upon the ground, “ I thank God that He allowed me to stand between you and your enemies.”

The Bishop raised him up, and embraced him. "My brethren," he said, addressing himself to his clergy and people, "this priest has been accused to me for taking part in heathen idolatries. Do you believe that one who had so defiled himself could have stood forth against the heathen as you have seen this man do?"

One voice, through all the church, answered, it was impossible.

Martin was the first of the clergy to come near to the Bishop: "I must have been deceived," he said; "I must have accused Ivo wrongly."

"You were deceived," Ivo answered; "I have not offended as you thought I had done. If I erred in judgment, and yielded too much to the customs of my countrymen, let the Bishop judge me." And so saying, he knelt down again before his Bishop, and asked what he should do to clear himself.

"Ivo, you are cleared," the Bishop answered; "your action this day has spoken for you; you *must* be innocent. We could not have seen your countrymen quail before you, if you had been a sharer in their errors. Forgive your brother Martin, who too hastily believed a false report; forgive me, too, for having doubted you; and receive the thanks of all those whom you have preserved—mine first."

Ivo eagerly held out his hand to Martin ; but when the sound of praises and of thanks arose on all sides, louder, and nearer, and warmer, he shrunk into himself ; he put his hands before his eyes, and prayed for a moment silently.

Then he said softly to the Bishop, " My father, do you grant me leave to withdraw ? I have need to humble myself and be thankful."

" Go in peace, my son, and the blessing of God go with you. But do not leave us to-day ; retire, if you will, for a while, but return to us again, and remain this night at the castle. I dare to say that you will be a welcome guest."

Ivo bent his head low, and left the chapel ; he wanted to be alone. He went upon the walls of the castle, where he had stood often when he was there for the first time ; and he eased his overburdened heart by pouring forth its gratitude in secret.

He was presently summoned to the venerable lady who had taken care of Verena in her childhood ; she was now advanced in years, and a widow. She had much to ask from Ivo, especially respecting his sister ; and when he had answered all her questions, she made her request to him that he would take her back with him to his island, to spend her remaining days there in quietness—that

she might live close to his church, and there serve God night and day. She thought to find more peacefulness there than in her son's castle, where war and feasting often disturbed her repose. She purposed to make her wish known to her son, and, taking one or two of her most faithful maidens with her, to return with Ivo.

It was done accordingly; and Ivo, who came alone, and, as he thought, disgraced, returned home loaded with honours, and conducting with him a large company. The Bishop had resolved to go with him to the island, to find out Ivo's slanderers, and endeavour to reconcile Eric to Swerker.

Eric welcomed their coming, and listened with wonder and pride to the history of Ivo's triumph, as it was told him by his guests. Thankful for that beloved brother who was restored to him, and now really humbled and really softened, he agreed to seek out Swerker, to make submissions to him, and to express his repentance for his past conduct publicly and fully. Swerker was persuaded to return from the place where he had taken up his abode; the two brothers were reconciled; and Eric acknowledged his fault, and expressed his repentance in the church, and was then re-admitted to the communion of

the faithful. He did more: he proposed to Ivo that he should yield the government of both islands to Swerker; he owned his fear that he was unfit to bear rule, that he was too ambitious and too arrogant. When Ivo heard these words from him, he did not doubt that Eric's heart was now fully turned to his holy faith; for till now ambition had been his snare. He would not decide that he should give up ruling, for he hoped that he might now be fitter for it than he had ever yet been. The matter was referred to the Bishop; and they agreed to be guided by his advice. He decided that Eric should govern the island of which he had been made chief; and that, to avoid farther disputes between their subjects, Swerker should inhabit the spot—not very far distant—which he had chosen for himself since he left his island. Ivo's slanderer was detected and punished, though Ivo's intercession prevailed for softening his punishment. Guda rejoiced with her whole heart, and loved her husband with more peace and confidence than she had ever done. Verena received the Christian lady, whom she honoured as her mother and her mistress, and prepared a peaceful home for her old age. The Bishop gave them his parting blessing, and took leave. Thus were they all prepared for the holy season before Easter.

In thoughtfulness and humility they observed it, each seeking out and confessing the sins of which each was conscious. Eric repented and humbled himself for the past; and Ivo, in as deep repentance and humiliation for the secret sins of his heart—for his infirmities and imperfections—bowed himself before his all-seeing Judge, and carried on the work of purifying his soul. The holy week passed in deep stillness, and the festival of Easter was welcomed by hearts full of love to God and to each other.

The happiest time of Ivo's life now began. He watched day by day the fuller growth of Christian character in Eric; and before long he had to welcome the birth of Eric's eldest child, and to rejoice in bestowing upon him that new birth which had not been granted to himself in infancy.

Several years passed, and Swerker also married, and his eldest-born was to be presented at the sacred font.

The Christmas season was ending; and on the feast of the Purification the infant was to be baptised.

Eric and Guda and their children, Ivo and Verena, and many of the inhabitants of the island, were to be present. But, a little before the appointed day, old Rolf fell ill; and

it was plain that his end was fast approaching. Ivo and Verena could not leave him. It was Ivo's part to supply to him the consolations of his faith, and Verena's to nurse him in his sickness.

On the eve of the Purification, all the rest of Swerker's expected guests set out on their visit to him. Verena watched them as she sat by the old man's bed; she could see Ivo accompanying Guda across the ice, leading one of the children by the hand, and carrying the youngest in his arms; she could see his leave-taking from her and Eric, and the children clinging to him, unwilling to let him go. Then, when they had all departed, she saw Ivo returning rapidly across the ice. He came into the sick-room, to administer the holy Communion to the dying man. Verena knelt to receive it with him, and by her side the lady who had been her mistress, and who now lived with her. This lady was now approaching to the age which Rolf had attained; and, with deep and quiet feeling, she came to share with him in his provision for his journey, the Food of immortality.

When the solemn rite had ended, the old man sunk into a deep sleep; and the three who watched by him sat conversing in low tones. The lady talked to her adopted child of the blessing which she proved to her in her old age; and, looking at Ivo, she expressed the

hope that he might minister to her last moments as he had ministered to Rolf's. Ivo sat meditating on the course of his past life—on the fulfilment of his boldest hopes—how much he had lived in a few years—how much had happened before he had yet reached to middle life:—"My brothers," he whispered half to himself—"brothers! that hope is yet unfulfilled."

"Trust that it will be fulfilled," said the aged lady.

"I do trust," Ivo answered instantly; "I almost believe that it will; how or when I know not. That done, I could desire to depart in peace." His voice dropped to a tone of softness, of resigned and steadfast hope. They all sat silent, till the sound of a bell called to the evening service. The lady bade Verena go to it with her brother, while she watched by Rolf.

They left her, and went together to the church. Their hearts were full, from thoughts of what they had just left; but they were thoughts free from bitterness, for the calm decay of age soothed rather than pained them while they watched over it. They were reminded of past times, of childhood and early youth; and they clung the closer to each other, as now, alone of their family, they approached the sacred building.

"See," said Ivo, as they passed through

the snowy enclosure of the churchyard; "see, here is the first snowdrop of the year." He stooped to gather it, and gave it to his sister. "Take it as a pledge of hope, in memory of our dear lady's words: she has just bidden us hope on; and when our brothers are given to us, we shall say again that our snowdrops have not promised in vain. How have their first promises to me been fulfilled!"

Verena pressed her brother's arm, and then withdrew her hand from it, for they had reached the church; he entered it and took his place, and she followed him.

He was reading the second lesson, when he was suddenly interrupted. A boy rushed into the church, and seized the end of his garment, clinging to it eagerly, and calling out to him to listen, with eager but respectful gestures. Ivo thought at first that the boy was threatened by some danger; but seeing no sign that he was pursued, he gently bade him be quiet. The boy, more earnestly than before, entreated to be heard, and clasped his knees.

"My master Haco will perish," he cried, "if he is not succoured. His cowardly followers have left him; Hagen is wounded; and he is now defending himself against a furious bear. He will perish if there is no help. Help, Ivo, help!"

He pronounced Ivo's name as if calling upon some being who was more than man, and still clung fast to him.

"Is it indeed thus?" asked Ivo anxiously.

"It is indeed. Oh, come, and lose no time. They will perish if you delay."

At these last words Ivo had made a step forwards; he glanced a look around him, as the thought of his sacred office held back his eager advance; he saw none present who might be trusted to rescue his brother. The best hunters and warriors were gone with Eric, and none remained who were so practised in hunting as he himself had been in earlier days. He felt that the sacredness and peacefulness of his office did not forbid him to help his brothers in their peril. He went down to Verena: "I must go," he said to her. He saw that she turned pale, and he paused. She saw that he paused.

"You *must* go?" she said; "then be it so." He thanked her with one look; then, leaving the church, he invited such of the men as were willing to follow him, asked for some hunting-spears, and told the boy to guide him. He was choosing from among the spears which were brought to him, when he perceived Verena advancing behind him from the church.

"Have you any thing still to say to me?"

Only, Ivo," she said, faltering in her

speech, and yet controlling herself—"only bless me before you go."

He did what she desired of him, and she returned into the church.

He hastened on his way. With steps with which his followers could not keep pace, he climbed the mountain to which the boy directed him, and soon a distant sound of growling guided him to the high point where his brothers had engaged in conflict with the furious Least. Haco's followers had left him, as the boy reported, after they saw Hagen disabled, and their chief engaged in conflict with one of the fiercest of those bears which occupied the mountains; but they had left him, not, as the boy supposed, from cowardice, but from treachery: they meant him to be a prey to the wild beasts.

Ivo found Hagen leaning against a ledge of rock, unable to assist Haco, who had been already wounded by the bear, and stood at the entrance of the cavern, defending himself against its repeated attacks. Ivo hastened on, and threw one of the spears which he carried at the animal; he wounded it,—but, more furious from its wound, it turned upon him; he met its coming with his other spear, and, after a short struggle, he stretched it dead upon the ground. He then went to the support of Haco, and, holding him up with his arm, he led him away from the

cavern. His followers by this time had come up ; some of them went to the assistance of Hagen, whilst others seized the bear to carry it home in triumph ; they bore flaming fir-branches with them, to give light to the craggy path. The two wounded brothers began to descend ; Haco went first, supported by Ivo. Presently a rustling was heard among the bare branches of the firs upon the crag, and Ivo saw a man advancing amongst them, who aimed a spear against Haco. Ivo threw himself forward to guard his brother, and the spear pierced his own side : he fell to the ground. It was one of Haco's treacherous followers, who had been watching in the hope of seeing him destroyed by the bear ; but when they saw him rescued from that danger, they resolved to kill him themselves. Part of Ivo's companions rushed after them ; but they fled, and escaped. The rest raised him from the ground, and soon perceived that he was dangerously wounded, and had not long to live.

They made a bier of fir-branches to carry him upon ; and, laying him on it, they descended the mountain with slow and mournful steps. His brothers accompanied the sad procession. They bore him with the utmost care ; but yet the motion of his bearers, slow and even as it was, made his wound more painful, and he was faint from loss of blood.

When the bearers had crossed the icy lake and reached the island, they rested their burden at the foot of the cross where Ivo had prayed when first he entered the island. They doubted where to carry him; they dreaded to alarm Verena; and they looked at each other in silent distress.

During this pause Ivo opened his eyes and looked up; then pointing to the church, he made signs to be carried thither.

Olave (the man whom he converted and preserved from death) had been ordained his deacon some time before, and ministered with him in the church. When Ivo was called to the mountain, Olave had finished the service, and he was still praying before the altar; he had remained praying there in silence for Ivo's safety. The old men, the women, and the children who remained in the church when Ivo's party left it, were there still, each praying for him, but each in silence.

When Ivo found himself in that sacred building, and the bier on which he lay was placed upon its floor, a look of peace spread over his countenance. The repose was welcome to his weary frame, and the peace of that holy spot was more welcome to his soul. He lay still and silent, crossing his hands on his bosom; only his lips moved, as if to repeat a prayer. All around him were motionless, watching him in silence, and not pressing

round him, lest they should disturb his repose.

A sound at last disturbed it; he heard a low-breathed sigh, so low that it could have reached no other ear but his; and he turned his head to her from whom it came. Verena was by his side; she had seen him before he was brought into the church; she had kept close by him, and stood now beside him, restraining every sign and sound of grief but that one sigh which had found its way to his ear. It drew his notice, yet it did not trouble the peace of that solemn hour. As soon as he had turned his head towards her, she knelt down by his side, and leaned her face against him, clinging to him as if for support and comfort, as she was used to do. He kissed her cheek, and then, in a low voice, speaking with difficulty, he said,—

“Ask Olave to read the prayers for the dying.”

She obeyed; and whilst the prayers were read he listened with fixed attention, his upraised eyes directed towards the roof of the church, his hands crossed as before.

When the prayers were ended, he still lay in the same posture; and as his lips moved, a faint sound came from them, and some words of the twenty-seventh Psalm were distinguished—“Thou shalt hide me in Thy tabernacle.” A fresh thought then seemed

to come across him ; he turned again to Verena, and asked, " Are our brothers here ? " She answered that they were ; and his two brothers, who stood by in sorrowful bewilderment, came near him : he held out his hand to them, and made an effort to speak ; but after he had uttered their names, his words became indistinct. He drew his sister close to him, and whispered a half-expressed request, commending them to her ; then his strength failed altogether, and his head sunk upon her shoulder. For one moment he looked up again,—his eye caught a glimpse of the snowdrop which he had given her in the morning—she wore it in the folds of her dress. The sight of it seemed to awaken trains of recollection in his wandering and failing thoughts. A look of eager brightness passed over his countenance, like the light of the setting sun upon a white cloud as it melts.

" Verena, spring is come," he said, in a tone more distinctly heard than any words that he had yet spoken. His head dropped when he had said it, and he fell asleep.

Verena did not kneel long beside the lifeless body. The recollection of Ivo's last request came into her mind, even before she could feel that it was indeed the *last*. She rose, and went to her two living brothers.

Haco shrank from her approach. She had

often shrunk from fear of his fierceness, but now he trembled before her; he dreaded the violence of grief which he expected to witness; but she calmly begged of him to come with her, and let her bind up his wound. Haco hesitated; he did not know how to leave the spot, or to withdraw his eyes from Ivo. "Come," she said, faintly, and with an effort; "he asked it."

Haco went with her, and Hagen followed. She bound up their wounds, and prepared their resting-place for the night; and then she returned to kneel and pray by Ivo's side.

When the festival of the morrow dawned, after the sad watching of its eve, it found Verena still kneeling by Ivo's side. Rolf had died in the course of the night; and the lady who had attended him now knelt near Verena. The deacon, Olave, was also there; they both prayed for her and with her, but they did not attempt to offer comfort; they did not interrupt her by speaking to her. Only, when the accustomed hour of the morning service drew near, they prepared to observe it as they would have done if Ivo living had still been with them.

The service was performed in its due order, and the words of thanksgiving, and the hymns suitable to a feast-day, were spoken by the

minister and by the people ; and whilst all the congregation occupied their accustomed places, the lifeless body of their pastor, decently composed and prepared for burial, lay in the midst, where the sweet smile that rested on his countenance soothed the grief of those that looked upon it.

During this time, the rest of the family were joyfully celebrating the baptism of Swerker's child ; but before night they had been summoned to that scene of sorrow. Gudahung in anguish over the brother whom she loved so fondly and gratefully ; and Eric stood silent and stupified by her side. When he spoke, it was to ask for his heathen brothers, and to speak words of affection to them. Ivo in his death fulfilled that hope which had not found its fulfilment during his life. His heathen brothers were softened. On the same day that the Bishop performed his funeral service, and saw him laid at the foot of the martyr's cross, Haco and Hagen received Baptism. The Bishop addressed the assembled multitude when both these services were ended ; he took for his text those words inscribed upon the martyr's grave—' Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.' None returned home from that solemn service with an untouched heart. How they preserved the feelings then awakened, how they fulfilled the purposes

then formed, cannot be told here; but we may hope that Ivo's brothers all held fast the hope of joining him in another world, and there acknowledging the blessings sent to them through his means.

I think you will wish to hear something more of Ivo's sister, Verena,—his twin-sister, who had so loved him and so leaned upon him. I need not tell you that she mourned; but you may wish to know whether she could be comforted. Yes, she could for she lived by Ivo's grave; she went daily to his church, she shared that Cup of grace which she had shared with him. She was still a member of the same holy Catholic Church, and she could not feel entirely separated from it. He was lost to her sight, but he could not be parted from her in spirit; and if his soul, in its place of rest, was employed in the worship of his Lord and hers, she might still share in his employment. They both belonged to that Lord "of whom the whole family of heaven and earth is named." She prayed, she hoped, she trusted. She *was* comforted, and she could comfort other mourners.

When spring came,—that spring foretold by the last snowdrop which Ivo gave her,—it seemed to the inhabitants of the island to bring only sadness in its gaiety. Eric pointed to the first tree which he saw covered with

fresh leaves, a young and vigorous tree that grew by the water-side; and he said, that their hope and joy was withered, and could never flourish again.

“No,” Verena answered; “he is transplanted to a better soil, where his leaf will never fade, where he is as a green olive-tree in the courts of our God. He is planted by the river which flows from the throne of God. On earth, he brought forth flowers and fruits in his due season, and in paradise he shall flourish, till the great day when all things are made new.”

When autumn came, the falling leaves seemed to renew their sadness; but it was of a softer kind, and they saw in it the type and promise of resurrection.

An autumn calm was shed over the remainder of Verena's life, sad, but soft and full of peaceful hope. She lived many years in prayer, and praise, and charity; and though she looked forward to the hour of release, she waited for it patiently. You remember, that from her earliest youth she offered a constant and diligent service to God; therefore her soul was like a watered garden; and to old age she continued that service, and possessed her soul in peace. She divided her time between the service of God and of her neighbours, and it never hung heavily. At length the hour of her release came; and she

too was laid in her place of rest under the church's shade.

“Blessed are the pure in heart,
For they shall see our God;
The secret of the Lord is theirs,
Their soul is Christ's abode.”



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